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*"Welcome to the Magical World of Disney -*
*Representation of 'Englishness'*
*in US American Animation:*
*Pocahontas (1995) and Pocahontas 2 (1998)"*

verfasst von / submitted by

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# INTRODUCTION

> One of the sources from which national character is learned is the mass media. Cinema and latterly television, as the pre-eminent mass entertainment media of the twentieth century, have functioned as propagators of the national image, both in reflecting widely held views and constructing, extending, interrogating and perpetuating dominant cultural myths. It is instructive, therefore, to look at films for evidence of the promotion of images of both the national character and national identity.
> (Richards 25-26)

The Disney company is a global enterprise that reaches a large audience worldwide and influences the audience's beliefs with its ideologies through their products. The films are not merely intended to provide entertainment, but also to educate the viewers. Disney himself stated: "I think of a child's mind as a blank book. During the first years of his life, much will be written on the pages. The quality of that writing will affect his life profoundly" (qtd. in Giroux 17). Thus, he was very well aware of the impact his films can have on children. Given, that he also produced short films for educational purposes, his intentions are obvious: The Disney company indoctrinates its viewers with specific ideals and values, representing them under the cover of the very typical 'Disney-way'; through magic, fairytales, and happiness. Such ideals cover gender roles, representations of the ideal family and of different nationalities.

There is a broad range of critical literature on Disney's films. Typically, they deal with gender, like Bell, Haas and Sells' *From Mouse to Mermaid* (1995) and Orenstein's *Cinderella Ate My Daughter* (2012), and racism or the stereotypical depiction of various nationalities, the latter being the subject of analysis in this study. Schickel's *The Disney Version* (1997), which was the first critical work published (even though it is rather a biography), Giroux's *The Mouse that Roared* (1999), and Ward's *Mouse Morality* (2002) are influential works for the study of national identity in Disney films.

As Said (26) identified, medial representations have reinforced stereotypical depictions of the Orient and indeed, much has been said in the works mentioned above on the depictions of other ethnicities in Disney films, and these critical studies have all concluded that the stereotypes employed by Disney often produce extremely negative representations of these ethnicities. It was in the late 20th century when Disney started to focus on otherness in their films. Fairytales were still their

main inspiration, however, the depiction of distant cultures grew important too. Such cultures were, amongst others, the French in *Aristocats* (1970) and *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), Africans in *The Lion King* (1994) or the Chinese in *Mulan* (1998). Not only does the Disney company portray cultural otherness, but they also project Western beliefs, such as family values or everyday rituals, in their films (Di Giovanni 208).

Such representations of cultural otherness will be part of the study at hand, and *Pocahontas* (1995) and its sequel *Pocahontas II - Journey to a New World* (1998) will be the main subject of analysis. Pocahontas is a Native American princess and is therefore geographically seen not 'Oriental', however, Said's concept can equally be employed to 'Otherness' in the sense of temporal distance, since it is still the Other in terms of Western beliefs, which makes *Pocahontas* a potential film to analyse.

Nevertheless, the major focus will not be the representation of Native Americans, which will only be compared to the way the English are represented in the film, in order to serve the main purpose of this thesis: Searching through studies that have already been conducted on *Pocahontas* and other Disney films, I noticed that all of them exclusively concentrated on the representation of those ethnicities strongly associated with otherness. Whilst in *Pocahontas*, the Native American culture has been discussed repeatedly (Di Giovanni, Edwards, Kutsuzawa, Ward, Parekh), I was not able to find literature on the depiction of Englishness. However, *Pocahontas* and its second part both intensively represent English identity and stereotypes associated with it. This identity is established by means of visual and verbal representation and further strengthened through its comparison with the Native Americans.

Representations of the English occurred in various Disney animations, such as *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), *Peter Pan* (1953), and *Robin Hood* (1973). At the time Pocahontas was produced, the English were, from Disney's US American perspective, a different culture, hence "the Other" as well. It seems, critics have simply regarded the English as US American, since the English in the film are truly the American's ancestors. Nevertheless I argue that there are differences portrayed and that the English are depicted as a culture on their own, with their own norms and

habits that sets them apart from what it means to be US American. This will be a part of what I aim to explore in the thesis at hand.

In order to examine Disney's realisation of Englishness, the first part of this thesis establishes the necessary background knowledge for cultural analysis in general, as well as Englishness in specific. Important concepts, terms, and analytical tools will be explained to ensure understanding of the methodology applied. In order to know what to look for in the films, a definition of 'Englishness' needs to be established. The aim is to produce a list of categories which can function as a guideline for the latter analysis. For this purpose, books on English identity will be examined in order to extract which characteristics of Englishness authors agree upon. Based on these findings, the outcomes of my analysis of *Pocahontas* (1995) and *Pocahontas II* (1998) will be discussed.

The major inspiration for this thesis is a presentation given on the representation of Britishness in four different Disney films–*Pocahontas* (1995), *101 Dalmatians* (1996), *Tarzan* (1999), and *Brave* (2012)–in the course of the seminar 'Critical Media Analysis' in 2013, with three fellow colleagues, two Austrians and one US American. For this presentation, we all watched one film on our own and additionally, in order to gain more objectivity, discussed our findings together and then presented them to the whole class where the outcomes were examined again. Already back then I had noticed how strongly neglected the analysis of Englishness in *Pocahontas* was. As a result of these thorough discussions and a positive feedback on the paper written at the end of the semester, I was provided with a basis to expand on. To ensure a detailed analysis, the films were watched four more times with different focuses. First, the aim was to achieve a general overview of the representation of the English and Native Americans by noting down anything that could be of importance, the second time I focused specifically on images and symbols of Englishness, the third time on language and accents, and the fourth time on the representation of the Native Americans only. After the whole analysis had been written down, I watched the film for a fifth time, together with an English native who was not informed of what I had already written in order to see whether I had missed or misunderstood something.

This also helped language wise to see whether there are US American influences and how the accents are perceived. This should not be ignored, as language can be a very powerful tool of characterisation. Lippi-Green's study (1997) will be a guiding tool here. Her hypothesis was that "animated films entertain, but they are also a way to teach children to associate specific characteristics and life styles with specific social groups, by means of language variation" (85). Lippi-Green concludes that especially male speakers of MUSE (mainstream US English), or another variety of English which is not stigmatised, are portrayed most positively. Characters of a specific colour, gender, and stigmatised origin or language are also depicted as more confined in their options and life choices (101). Lippi-Green's findings show how important language choices in Disney films are, and that the characters' accents are hence not chosen randomly, but very often to convey a certain meaning. Especially children "learn from entertainment industry [...] to be comfortable with *same* and to be wary about *other*" and language is one medium to enforce such attitudes (103). Therefore, I will include an accent analysis for each film in order to find out more about Disney's ideological framework.

Finally, the films have to be viewed in their broader context. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' interpretation of the films, and the films are consequently interpreted in different ways depending on the background knowledge one has. However, Disney certainly privileged a specific meaning and in order to examine, which meaning this could be, it is not enough to only look at the visual levels of representation of identity. For this purpose, Paul du Gay's and Stuart Hall's *circuit of culture* prove to be an essential analytical tool. It offers a method to understand how a cultural item (a text, a film, etc.) produces meaning. It is composed of five processes–identity, representation, production, regulation and consumption–which interrelate and influence each other. Identity and representation are the visible areas, whereas the processes of production (setting, products, people involved, historical context), regulation (political, economic, and cultural influences on the productions, rules and authorities involved in the process), and consumption (audience, effects on the audience, but also what the audience does with the media) remain rather invisible.
In order to go beyond the surface and provide a thorough analysis, it is therefore necessary to put the film into the context of its production, intended audience, and

the regulations involved in it and to reveal the motivations behind what is represented. The circuit of culture hence offers a view from various angles and ensures a higher level of objectivity in critical media analysis. The audience of a film is actively involved in the process of meaning making and also influence its production, in the sense that it is targeted towards a special audience.

Especially in *Pocahontas* (1995), production and regulation processes played a major part in the making of meaning. It was the first Disney film to be based on a historical event rather than on a fairy tale and Walt Disney and his employees very carefully employed numerous changes in order to fulfil their own purposes and to create a very specific image in the audience's minds. These changes conducted by Disney are usually referred to as 'Disneyfication' (see Schickel, Gorini, Di Giovanni), the process of transforming content into a magical spectacle and thereby whitewashing the negative aspects of it. Therefore, it is important to consider the film in a broader historical context in order to understand those themes existing beyond what is evident on the silver screen. Indeed, identity is not only created through what is portrayed, but also through what is concealed, and, hence, a comparison to historical accounts of Pocahontas' story can reveal more information with regard to certain elements of the story that were rendered saccharine, or omitted.

Consequently, by analysing the two films from various perspectives, it will be shown that the processes mentioned above take a crucial part in establishing a very specific image of Englishness. The central characteristic that constitutes English identity in the movies is imperialism, since the story of Pocahontas deals with America's and England's imperialist past. Strong symbols and icons can be detected that emphasise the English's superior behaviour towards the Native Americans. Although the English are the ancestors of today's US Americans, the Disney company employs certain methods to distance the US Americans from their cruel history of genocide. Such methods are, amongst others, the use of specific accents and congenial characters that appeal to the audience, as will be shown in the latter analysis. At the same time, US American values influence the depictions of the cultures, especially of the Native Americans. Additionally to imperialism, other stereotypical characteristics of English identity can be examined in the films, such as humour and the ideal of the English gentleman. These will be outlined and analysed in further detail. Finally, the representations of the natives will be of significant

importance too, as an entity's identity is further strengthened through the comparison with the Other.

Taking these things into account, the study aims to analyse the following aspects:

- A definition of Englishness and a list of characteristics that constitute English identity, based on the consent of numerous works (Fox, Paxman, Richards, Haseler) to enable a thorough analysis

- A thorough analysis of the dominant representations of the two cultures in question, the English and the Native Americans, with a focus on Englishness and by means of images, symbols, icons, language, and accents and how they serve to create these representations

- An exploration of the established relationship between those two cultures in order to see how Englishness is identified by means of comparison to the cultural Other

- The films in the broad context of the circuit of culture in order to examine Disney's Western beliefs and values represented in the film and the messages conveyed by means of Disneyfication, the process of whitewashing negative content and emphasising the positive, magical, and happy

Additionally, this study aims to raise awareness of Disney's ideological messages and to provide the readers with a useful tool for further critical analyses of Disney's animations, as these representations should not be taken at their face value and made explicit from childhood onwards.

# 1 NATIONAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES

Since the aim of this paper is to establish an understanding of how Disney represents nationalities, with a focus on Englishness, and to critically process these representations, it is important to understand terms such as national identity, culture, stereotypes, and representation. Furthermore, the analysis will be theoretically informed by Paul du Gay's and Stuart Hall's circuit of culture, and semiotics including symbols, signs, icons, and indexes. In the following sections, these terms and concepts will shortly be explained.

## National Identity and Culture

In broad terms, 'identity' can be defined as "a sense of self that encompasses who people think they are, and how other people regard them" (Blunt et al. 72). These identities are hence socially constructed. Each individual has numerous identities depending on the context. Such identities "define themselves by gender, family, religion, ethnic group, class, status, city, region, [and] nation" (Richards 1). National identity is based on ritualised behaviour, common values, and cultural objects, such as buildings, pieces of art, and literature (Teske 144).

The nation within such an identity exists, however, is "imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 6). This awareness of belonging to a group implies a feeling of sharing a common set of values and purposes that "motivate collective action" (Spencer 18).

Within this "imagined community", there are vertical and horizontal differences (Andersen 7). It is the horizontal differences, a nation's identity as opposed to another one's, that matter in most Disney films, such as in *Pocahontas* (1995), the central film of my analysis. The clash of two cultures, the English and the Algonquian tribe of the Powhatans, constitutes the main storyline of the film. Vertical differences such as gender or class are only rarely depicted, whereas the horizontal differences between the two nations are vividly expressed by actions, language, and visual symbols. Not only in films, but also in our everyday lives these horizontal differences

matter if we speak about national identities. It is easier to describe one nation by comparing it to others in order to extract what it is, that makes a nation special, a behaviour or value 'typical'.

For the anthropologist Kate Fox, national identity and character especially encompass unwritten rules (2). These rules constitute culture, and often work subconsciously to control our habits and everyday activities (Ryan, *Preface*). The existence of such rules does not implicate that *all* people of a culture behave in a certain way, but that certain rules are present in characteristics, behaviour, beliefs, values, and customs, and "common enough, or marked enough, to be noticeable and significant" as belonging to a certain culture (Fox 9f.). In Ryan's words, culture, therefore, describes a way of life which "tends to produce a commonality of thought and behavior, as well as conformity with reigning standards, norms, and rules." (*Preface*). The term 'culture' can furthermore refer to "music, literature, painting and sculpture, theatre and film" (Williams 90), hence, cultural objects. One is not born with a specific culture, but it is learned by acculturation, or socialisation through experiences in, and expectations of, a specific society (Longhurst et al. 4). Smith lists numerous ways to promote a national identity and therefore to strengthen this process of acculturation: "flags, anthems, parades, coinage, passports, war memorials, folklore, museums, oaths, popular heroes and heroines, fairytales, national recreations, legal procedures, educational practices and military codes" (77, qtd. in Richards 2).

It is often the littlest habits and practices that become tradition and form an essential part of national identity. "Everyday life consists of the little things that one hardly notices in time and space. . . . The everyday happening is repeated, and the more often it is repeated the more likely it is to become a generality or rather a structure" (Braudel 1985 in Fromer 2008: 8).

## Stereotypes

Stereotypes, as signifying practices, are "exaggerated belief[s] about a group", which serve to reduce complexity, as they can be quickly understood and processed, while they produce otherness at the same time (Hall, *Representation* 257, Long, Paul and Wall 82f.). This is especially taken advantage of by advertising and other sectors of

media. Long, Paul and Wall claim that stereotypes are usually about groups or people with a lower status in society, such as minority groups (83). However, there are stereotypes which concern many different groups, not only those that are minorities. The English have a powerful historical background, nevertheless their identity is often represented highly stereotypical. The authors themselves mention a few examples (see 82). Richards lists one-dimensional stereotypes the British have about others, originally noticed by George Orwell and mentioned in an essay in 1939: The French and Italians are excitable and gesticulate wildly, the Spaniards are sinister, the Chinese wear pigtails, and others, all referring to rather powerful nations (qtd. in Richards 13).

Stereotypes are part of categorisation as a meaning-making process. We categorise people according to "the membership of different groups, according to class, gender, age group, nationality, 'race', linguistic group, sexual preference and so on" (Hall, *Representation* 257). Therefore, typifications are part of characteristics that are widely recognised and easy to understand.

Based on Steve Neale, Martin Baker identifies two definitions of a stereotype in his independent publication, "The Lost World of Stereotypes". A stereotype can either be viewed as one because it "shows a deviation from the 'real world'" (86) or it is a very true description of it (87). The former would be the very often represented stereotype that women want sex any time, the latter would be the stereotype that depicts black people as living in poor conditions and economically disadvantaged. Whilst the first stereotype does not resemble reality, the latter, unfortunately, has been investigated and approved of. This leads to a conflict: Either a stereotype disables us to view the world as it is, or it "has to stop us seeing anything but the world as it is" (87). These stereotypes, as means of categorisation, tend to influence us until "something positively interferes, like a good radical pointing out the error of our ways" (87). Until this happens, we tend to use them automatically to categorise the world (ibid.). However, stereotypes are not necessarily wrong generalisations, but a synopsis of one's experiences with a specific group (89). Regardless of which type of stereotype, both are pre-cognitive "storehouses of the past" which typically occur in mass-media, whereas non-stereotypes are cognitive, point to the future, and typically develop in education (88). This is important to consider in cultural studies,

as development is only possible if we do not continue to reproduce 'traditional' world views and question the validity and need of a specific stereotype in the future.

I agree with Barker, and also Tessa Perkins (77), that there can be a 'grain of truth' in stereotypes, and one does have to reveal their roots and role in order not to take them at face value. Each stereotype must be based on something that has actually reoccured often enough to be noticed. The challenge is to filter out those stereotypes that can be discussed and explored from the inside. If we cannot detect its origin and critically explain it, this stereotype can be compared to Roland Barthe's notion of 'myth' (see next point), a meaning which is there, but without an explanation for its existence.

Disney's animated features frequently rely on common stereotypes to create cultural otherness (Di Giovanni 91):

> There is nothing spontaneous in the cultural portraits which they offer to their viewers. Relying only on a few, fixed traits which belong to a long-standing repertoire drawn up in the West and for the West, these representations seem to deny any sort of dynamism and evolution to the cultures portrayed. (93)

This thesis will therefore explore the conventional, stereotypical representation of Englishness, both visual and verbal, and their realisation in two different Disney films.

## Otherness

> [O]therness in Disney mainstream movies is mainly used as a narrative pretext to support [...] the cultural and economic supremacy of a post-colonial superpower whose influence worldwide is strongly promoted by the media. (Di Giovanni 107)

The representation of "otherness through a filtered gaze has its roots in Western colonialism", in the times where the dominant colonists attempted to impose their own values and norms, in short their own culture, onto the host countries. Through the Other, they were furthermore able to redefine and strengthen their own identity and superiority. Drawing an image of otherness is often used for entertainment purposes whilst it also strengthens "the superiority of the narrating culture" (Di Giovanni 93, 94). The images are created through stereotypes, "with no hint at other

aspects of the cultures which are represented, nor to their evolution" (96). The Other in Disney films is always shown as "an asymmetrical relationship, whereby the distance between the narrated and narrating cultures is to be felt either on the geographical or on the temporal axis" (95). In *Pocahontas*, for example, the Native Americans are portrayed as inferior and geographically distant to the English colonists, and inferior, but temporally distant, to the US Americans, who are represented through more subtle processes of significations, such as hybridity of accents or specific values.

Edward Said speaks of 'Orientalism', the way the 'West', or 'Occident', represent 'The East', or 'Orient', within practices of imperialism. They created an image to justify their domination over Eastern countries by depicting them as subordinate and helpless. The Occident claims authority over the Orient, and "authority here means for "us" to deny autonomy to "it"–the Oriental country–since we know it and it exists, in a sense as we know it" (32). In *Pocahontas*, the US Americans know the English and the natives, and hence being English, or Native American, is, what the US Americans think it is (34). Saussure points out how we create meaning about something by relating it to something else. 'Black' is defined by its contrast to 'white'. The differences between dichotomies carry the meaning (qtd. in Hall, *Representation* 234). Orientalism thus creates hierarchies, dichotomises and also essentialises, it portrays opposites and reduces them to simplistic descriptions (Said 31-36). Being English is often associated with being white, however, there are many black English as well, or women can also have a masculine side, additionally to their feminine nature (Hall, *Representation* 235).

As a consequence of 'othering', "[t]he relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, [and] of domination of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (Said 5). The West creates their own identity by opposing themselves to what they think of the East. Whilst the West is portrayed positively, as rational, democratic, present, and progressive, the East is perceived as irrational, despotic, timeless, and absent (Longhurst et al. 123). Important is that the way the Orient is depicted is not the truth, as it is viewed from an exterior position, hence it is only 'represented' (Said 21).

This concept of Orientalism can be generally employed to 'Otherness'. Othering is unavoidably connected to (national) identity, as it belongs to the process of shaping identities:

> To be English is to be your self in relation to the French and the hot-blooded Mediterranean, and the passionate, traumatized Russion soul. You go round the entire globe: when you know what everybody else is, then you are what they are not.
> (Hall, *Globalization* 21)

In *Pocahontas*, for example, 'the Other' are the Powhatans. The discourse of Orientalism works for them too, even though they are geographically seen not the Orient, but part of Western history. However, the same processes that happen in Orientalism–the reduction to simple dichotomies and the creation of hierarchies–can be similarly detected in this context. When the English encounter the natives for the first time, they immediately perceive the difference and react to it. They notice 'what they are not', and distance themselves to emphasise their own imagined national identity in order to get control over the situation.2 DEFINING ENGLISHNESS

> Being English used to be so easy. They were one of the most easily identified peoples on earth, recognized by their language, their manners, their clothes and the fact that they drank tea by the bucketload. It is all so much more complicated now.
> [Paxman, *Introduction*]

To establish a working definition of Englishness, it is first necessary to draw attention to the differences between Englishness and Britishness. Only after this is made clear, can one focus on the definition of "English identity". To analyse a piece of work, as will be done with *Pocahontas I* and *II*, the primary aim is to outline the most central characteristics that constitute Englishness in order to use them as a guideline for the analysis.

It is difficult to grasp what represents English identity as a whole. However, there are still a few things, that might be "typically English", which separate the concept from Scottishness, Welshness, or any other countries' identities. As Kate Fox (17) puts it: "We all do it, in fact. We describe a social group, a person, or even, say, just one of that person's reactions or characteristic mannerisms, as 'very English' or 'typically English'." She considers stereotypes such as "English 'reserve',

'politeness', 'weather-talk', [...], 'fair play', 'humour', 'class-consciousness', eccentricity'", among others, as characteristics showing layers of rules that need to be made visible (22).

In the following section, literature on Englishness, and its observations, will be summarised and discussed.

## 2.1 Englishness vs Britishness

> Britain today may give a surface impression of uniform or homogeneous behaviour, which is influenced by an English norm centred on the dominant role of London as the centre of political and economic life. But there is also considerable heterogeneity or difference in British life, such as the cultural distinctiveness and separate identities of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland [...].
> (Oakland 1998: 3)

The line between Englishness and Britishness is very fine, and too often these two identities are conflated, a confusion widely noted in literature (Kumar 1, Paxman *Preface*, Haseler 28, Fox 20f., Richards 3). Not only are foreigners often unable to distinguish these two identities, but it also befalls the English themselves. Kumar identifies the English hegemony over Britain, also strongly noticed abroad, as the main reason for this "natural confusion" of Britishness and Englishness (1). This causes a problem for the definition of English identity, as even for the English it is difficult to differentiate their own definition of Englishness from what it means to be British beyond any political differences (2). Paxman states in his introduction that a Scot would be furious when Scottish is confused with British. However, for the English, the two terms 'English' and 'British' were almost interchangeable during times of English imperialism. He draws attention to the fact that hardly anyone notices England's national day on the 23rd of April, whereas they do, pointedly, celebrate British ceremonies like the Queen's birthday. Furthermore, while the Welsh and the Scots have their own national hymns, an English soccer team proudly sings the British anthem, glorifying the monarchy and political union (11). Two other songs the English sing on special occasions are "Rule Britannia" and "Land of Hope and Glory", and both are about Britain (172f.). The English may lack English national symbols, but this could arguably demonstrate "a certain self-confidence" (11). Hattersley identifies this confidence as an inherent symbol of English identity: "Indeed, not making a fuss about being English seems to me an essential ingredient

of Englishness" (2). In the 18th century, the British Empire became one of the most powerful empires and it was run from England. The centre of Britain was, therefore, in England, with London as the British and English capital. England, as the focal point of power, provided the character for Britain, "which is why Britain and England are still often spoken of interchangeably by the English and by foreigners, though never by the Welsh and the Scots" (Richards 8). The English believed themselves to be superior to class, the English ideal became closely associated with the idea of building an empire (Paxman 70).

In his preface to *Waving the Flag*, Andrew Higson wonders about the same question: "Are we English or are we British?". Just as Paxman is, he is certain that the idea of Englishness has influenced the notion of British national identity since 1708, when the union was established. Haseler (29) also calls "(t)he expansion and reconstruction of the English nation-state, its transformation from England to Britain" a "transmutation into Britishness" by means of the Act of Union. 'Greater England' would have been a more suitable name for the new state, as many English have always seen England as the epicentral power base of Great Britain (30f.). Haseler states that "although the imperial mentality flowed quite naturally from the ideology of Englishness, the whole experience of Empire provided a crucial new twist in the development of English identity" (37). It was the English aristocracy and their ideology of eighteenth-century Englishness that created the Empire; an identity with "land, class, and race" as a central focus of importance (37). Vice versa, Britain had a significant impact on the notion of Englishness, turning it into something more powerful and superior and expanding its meaning, such as the imperial expansion which enhanced England's territory of political influence (33, 37).

Fowler, on the other hand, does argue for a sense of Englishness that is contrasted to what it means to be British:

> How should an Englishman utter the words Great Britain with the glow of emotion that goes for him with England? His sovereign may be Her Britannic Majesty to outsiders, but to him is Queen of England; he talks the English language; he has heard of the word of an Englishman and aspires to be an English gentleman; and he knows that England expects every man to do his duty . . .In the word England, not in Britain all these things are implicit.
> (Fowler 1983: 157)

Even if in times of imperialism the difference between Britain and England was blurred, it is still important to acknowledge it. Britain's identity consists of the identities of its members: Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, and England, four nations that have their own cultural narratives.

The analysis in this paper discusses Englishness in the sense of such narratives: cultural activities, behaviour, norms, values, and stereotypes. The term Englishness is used because each of the films displays characters from England, not elsewhere in Britain. The most well-known difference between Britain and England is the extent of both their political and geographical territories, with Britain encompassing further areas that are not relevant for this study[1]. Whereas England is a nation on its own, which goes back to the days before the union in 1707, Britain is rather a political construct, even if invented by the English, and even if there is a great overlap of cultural norms. The analysis does not cover characters from Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, which is the main reason why the term 'Britishness' is avoided in order not to lead to confusion. However, some typical representations of 'Englishness' might have their source in literature on 'Britishness', as long as they clearly focus on the English when discussing identity.

## 2.2 English Identity

The history of the English language could be one reason why the English began to develop a national consciousness. In the early 14th century, French and Latin were still preferred as official languages. However, in the late 14th century English became the official language of government, and also grew in importance for literature, with Geoffrey Chaucer as the first poet writing in English. In the 15th and 16th century, with new printing and publishing technologies, and, even more importantly, with the emergence of Shakespeare, the language gained popularity and the consciousness of being English grew. Another significant step was the first English bible, published by King James in 1604 (Higson 13f.). Higson perceives the 18th century as the key

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[1]     An even more accurate definition would distinguish between Britain (established 1707 to unite England, Wales and Scotland) and the UK (including the former three and Northern Ireland, established in 1801). Britain is referred to as encompassing all four nations, since it united with the UK to "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland". (cf. Oakland 1998: 61f.)

stage of the development of English identity; a time when a national sensibility developed and the crucial elements of this identity, "its very DNA", were formed:

> It [the culture of Englishness] was to dominate the islands in which it was born, determining not only their cultural development but their politics, economics and social development as well. And it was to expand overseas and provide the culture and ideology of rule for one-third of the globe. (17)

According to Higson, through the establishment of Great Britain and their increasing power, the English gained confidence and developed an identity closely connected with the Empire. Since there was now a political institution, the national sentiment of the English was strengthened (22). The writing class had an important role in this process, as they created national images themselves, defining and describing a national identity, and maybe even creating it (26). The 18th century was also the time the English class system received its unique status as part of English culture for the following two hundred years, differing significantly from other types of class systems (18f.).

The English have always put their trust in institutions, but after the power of the British empire had faded in the twentieth century, they had to discover and re-invent their own identity distinct from the concept of Britain (Paxman 17, Higson 2). Whereas it used to be easy to define the English by their language and race, it is nowadays hard to understand the typical aspects of Englishness, as some have changed with history. The English language is spoken worldwide, and with the American cultural invasion in the late 19th century, American words filtered into the British English language corpus–words such as 'guy', 'sure', 'great', and 'to fix' (Haseler 90). Defining English in racial terms has become impossible too–with ethnic minorities representing over six per cent of England's population by the end of the 20th century (Paxman 71). Roy Faiers, who invented the magazine *This England*, even argued for the possibility to choose whether one wants to be English or not, no matter what racial background they have (qtd. in Paxman 80).

Therefore, there must be other central aspects that can be identified as 'typically English'. Numerous authors and researchers had made lists in search of a definition for Englishness (Paxman 22, T.S. Eliot, Titchmarsh 130-136, Orwell 11, Gelfert's *table of contents*). Of course, there is always a certain process of

stereotyping and myth-making included. However, as some characteristics recur in so many different sources, many written by English authors themselves, one can feel a common thread on how the English are perceived and what they consider as their own identity. These lists all showed aspects of the following themes:

### 2.2.1 The Ideal of the English Gentleman and English Politeness

> "Just try counting how many 'please' and 'thank yous' are involved in buying a newspaper, or register the number of occasions on which someone apologizes for bumping into you on the train."
> (Paxman 254)

With the establishment of the English class system in the 18th century, an idea of the 'English Gentleman' appeared in the social world–an archetype personifying English culture. This idea became so powerful that it was reproduced by the media worldwide throughout the 20th century. "'The English gentleman' had established itself in the global culture in a manner which simply cannot apply to a 'French gentlemen' or an 'American gentleman'[...]", thereby becoming a strong symbol of English identity (Higson 1995: 19). Honour was extremely important, as it set one apart from the common people "who were morally lax and without civilization". Morality meant being sincere, innocent, honest, frank, truthful, and morally independent (27f.). Paxman also wrote of the English that their worthiest possession used to be their sense of honour. Being trustworthy and steadfast, the "word of an English gentleman was as good as a bond sealed in blood." (1). While he argues that other adjectives in his list to describing the English are not fully applicable anymore, he still believes that humbleness and impeccable manners are part of the ideal of the English gentleman (81). Other authors mention politeness and honour as central parts of English character as well. In *The myth of the Blitz*, Calder (196) made a list comparing how the English perceived themselves and the Germans during World War II. Whereas the Germans were seen as brutal and aggressive tyrants, the English considered their own people as friendly, tolerant, calm and patient. Odette Keun (qtd. in Paxman 80) spoke about the character traits she loved about the English: "Courtesy, kindness, obligingness, tolerance, moderation, self-control, fair play, a cheerful temper, pleasant manners, calmness, stoicism, and an extremely high degree of social civilisation [...]", all aspects that apply to the ideal of the English Gentleman.

John Bull, the national personification of the United Kingdom, especially England, represents this gentleman. He is honest, proud, independent, reliable, and believes in Law and Order (Paxman 184 f.) Fox (2004) cites the importance of saying 'please' and 'thank you', as the failure to do so is construed to be a "serious offence" (94).

> During my research on Englishness, I diligently counted all the pleases and thank-yous involved in every purchase I made, and found that, for example, a typical transaction in a newsagent's or corner shop (such as, say, my usual purchase of a bar of chocolate, a newspaper and a packet of cigarettes) usually involves two pleases and three thank-yous (although there is no upper limit on thank-yous, and I have often counted five).
> (Fox 94)

However, as Higson suggests, 'character'–including all the traits mentioned above–is not the only important attribute of the English gentleman. Additionally, a powerful social position was necessary, and often the image was linked to a life in the countryside (27). The gentlemen possessed enough power to be the master of himself and his life, however, he did not occupy "over-weaning power" (Haseler 50).

According to Newman (qtd. in Richards 10), the gentleman's roots go back to the eighteenth century, as a result of the resurgence of authors like Shakespeare and their values of 'sincerity'–later called 'decency'. Richards (12) has a similar explanation: "Inspired by Sir Walter Scott's idealizations of the Middle Ages, chivalry was deliberately promoted by such key figures of the age [...] to provide a code of life for the young, based on the virtues of the gentleman", with these key figures being based in literature too. This ideal did not depend on class, but was a major part of the nation's identity (Barker 566-567, qtd. in Richards 12).

The Victorian gentlemen did not brag about himself; his sincerity was a character trait at the very heart of Englishness. During the 20th century, the English gentlemen became a cult figure, and a central social character of Englishness, leading his men in two wars, solving murders in films, or being a romantic hero in novels. Especially through the medium of film, this ideal reached the postwar mass-market, with James Bond as one characteristic example of the time (Haseler 51, 72). Whereas the ideal of the gentleman, or decency, was strong and important in Victorian times, it has now rather become a national stereotype for the tourist trade (Higson 28). However, it failed to modernise, persisting as an image of pre-industrial

values and rural manners in an increasingly industrial and urban country (72). Haseler (65) names it 'frozen Englishness'. One reason for this was that the English identity was based on superiority and confidence, and therefore needed the Empire's power to exist. Whilst Britain lost its power, and 'Englishness' was actually weakened, the people did not face the truth, and continued to believe in their self-created identity. This identity was a false one, and any area that exhibited a different identity, such as with industrial growth, was denied by the English and treated suspiciously (105).

### 2.2.2 English Stereotypical Behaviour and Lifestyle

From popular media one gets a very specific, certainly stereotypical, image: The English drink a lot of tea and alcohol, have a dry sense of humour, love DIY, constantly speak about the weather, cannot behave themselves when abroad, cherish their monarchy, frequent clubs, and enjoy gardening, and good literature. As Paxman writes, "Stereotypes are comforting, save us the trouble of fresh thought […]." (183). This suggests that the English might also have perpetuated those caricatures of themselves because of the indifference to finding their own definition of English identity. Higson (1), supports this thought, saying that Englishness is "one of the world's strongest and most enduring stereotypes and self-images" and arguably invented and sustained by the English themselves. Speaking about a conversation he once had with a friend who blamed the English for having "a superiority complex" and not caring about what others think, Paxman further supports this idea of indifference (129). He does not mention the term 'stereotypes', but speaks about a "picture of England that the English carry in their collective mind", one that is "astonishingly powerful" (144). Presumably the power of this picture has produced a number of stereotypes that have been taken up by others. Those stereotypes have clearly proven to be very durable and can be detected in many different means of representation, from literature, to comedy, to film. They are also represented by John Bull, who went through various changes, but always displayed the most typical characteristics mentioned above. It is for a reason that his character has endured for so long as the personification of England. If the English had not accepted the way they were represented, John Bull would not have survived for long (ibid.).

The English way of life has influenced stereotyping for entertainment purposes significantly. Haseler calls it theme-park Englishness or stage Englishness, spread by mass media and the travel business. He describes an 'Englishness for export', one that was especially reflected around the globe by Hollywood in the late twentieth century. A very specific image of Englishness was sent abroad and then further spread to be perceived as the world's image of Englishness (Haseler 3).  This applies to the Disney films analysed too, as will be discussed later in this paper.

Specific characteristics can further be detected in many of the previously mentioned lists existing in literature on Englishness. Paxman presents such a list of activities and aspects he associates with the English, including cricket, Do-It-Yourself, irony, Shakespeare, quizzes and crosswords, gardening, good beer, drinking to excess, and many more (22). He emphasises their love for words, thereby pointing to literature (110). He numbers the various clubs the English attend, such as fishing, birdwatching, supporting football teams, playing cards, among many more (139).

Since such lists have found so much popularity in literature, it is easy to summarise those characteristics that were mentioned in the majority of them, and to use them as a framework for the film analyses. The succeeding pages present the following key aspects found in literature and explore them in further detail:

- Modesty
- Humour
- Drinking and Pub-Culture
- Drinking Tea
- Gardening
- Inventions

**Modesty**

Modesty, as part of the ideal English Gentlemen, is often paraphrased with "the English's stiff upper lip", the basis of the unwritten rule not to show too much emotion, neither negative nor positive; behaviour that is often acknowledged in literature on Englishness (Gelfert 29, Paxman 240-243, Fox 66), and named by Kate Fox as the "Understatement Rule". She views understatement as a subcategory of

modesty, but also of humour. "Rather than risk exhibiting any hint of forbidden solemnity, unseemly emotion or excessive zeal, we go the opposite extreme and feign dry, deadpan indifference", which means that illnesses or horrible experiences are usually downplayed as a 'bit of a nuisance' or 'not exactly what I would have chosen', as well as exciting and beautiful experiences being reduced to 'quite pretty', 'not bad' or 'nice' (66). Gelfert, however, argues that modesty had its glory days in times of English imperialism and decreased towards the late 20th century. The English still portray a higher amount of self-discipline than other nations (Gelfert exemplifies the German, French and Italians), but it is not that strictly ritualised and preserved as it was in Victorian times (30).

**Humour**

Humour, especially in the form of irony, is another strong characteristic associated with Englishness. Traces of humour go back to the 12th century, when Henry wrote in Historia Anglorum: "Aglia plena iocis, gens libera, digna iocari." ("England is full of jokes, free people, people ready to make jokes"; my translation) (qtd. in Gelfert 63). Paxman notices that "[t]he English at least have the saving grace of being able to laugh at themselves", something that shows great self-confidence (132). Fox (62) agrees on this capacity. To her, this faculty is one of the most amiable characteristics the English have:   "Humour rules. Humour governs. Humour is omnipresent and omnipotent [...], it permeates every aspect of English life and culture", she believes (61). For her anthropological studies, she interviewed many English natives and also foreigners, and almost all concurred with the popular belief that the English have a better sense of humour than others (64). Nevertheless, Fox acknowledges that humour is universal, as well as irony, since it is a part of humour. What makes it so special is the omnipresence of it in everyday English discourse, and its importance to the English population (65). Included in 'humour', she considers "banter, teasing, irony, understatement, humorous self-deprecation, mockery or just silliness" (61). The "Self-deprecation Rule", which prohibits blatancy and encourages self-derision, is also closely connected with English modesty (68). Gelfert adds puns to the list of subcategories, stating that 'punning' is present in every context; from journalism and literature to conversations and politics (64).

But why is humour so omnipresent in English culture? What is its importance? It is a fact that humour helps to relieve tension. Humour as such is not peculiarly English, but rather universally enjoyed. For the English, however, humour developed as a medium to survive within society. Gelfert calls it "ein soziales Schmiermittel", a way to mediate between the individual and the pressures of social conformity. Humour surprises, but it also induces cheerfulness. Therefore, humour is the opportunity to relieve certain tensions and to detract from expectations the society– but in a subtle and acceptable way (66f.).

**Drinking and Pub-Culture**

Drinking has been important since early history. There are medieval proverbs confirming this, such as: "The Auvergner sings, the Breton writes, the Englishman drinks" (Paxman 251). William of Malmesbury wrote in *Chronicle of the Kings of England* how drinking was a practice that took place every day and every night during the Norman Conquest (qtd. in Paxman 251). The Archbishop of Canterbury complained about binge drinking, even on holidays, as alcohol seemed to be more important than the church (qtd. in Paxman 252). In 1742, cheap gin was drunk ten times as much as it is today. Dostoevsky describes pubs in London as a place where everyone is "drunk joylessly, gloomily and heavily", and intends to drink themselves "into insensibility" (qtd. in ibid.). Drinking had become such a common habit for the English that in the early 20th century, the government decided to limit opening times of pubs and to restrict alcohol sold to be consumed at home. This measure remained successful for a while, though by the late 1990s, with slackening of the licensing laws, old habits were soon recommenced, and alcohol was now combined with drugs. However, the English do not drink more than other Europeans, and, therefore, their reputation to drink excessively must have to do more with the manner in which they consume alcohol rather than mere volume. Paxman blames the "lack of a café society" for this, as there are mostly pubs in England and they are primarily designed for drinking (252, 253).

Fox believes the pub to be an essential part of English culture, and that its importance cannot be stressed too much (88). According to her, about fifty-thousand public houses in England are treated like a second home by their customers, with a third of adults and more than 64 per cent of the younger population regularly visiting

these watering holes at least once a week at the beginning of the 21st century (253, no source for numbers given). There are pubs for all purposes and target groups, from students and family pubs to theme-pubs and sport-pubs (ibid.).

**Drinking Tea**

Aside from drinking alcohol in pubs, drinking tea is an essential part of everyday English life, and the "comfortable, secure basis for the rest of life's responses, decisions and actions" (Fromer 1). As Fox observes, tea is routinely described as a miraculous liquid–a panacea–that can serve as a solution to every problem. Whenever something unpleasant happens, even if it is just an uncomfortable feeling or silence, the English, allegedly, make tea:

> A cup of tea can cure, or at least significantly alleviate, almost all minor physical ailments and indispositions, from a headache to a scraped knee. Tea is also an essential remedy for all social and psychological ills, from a bruised ego to the trauma of a divorce or bereavement. This magical drink can be used equally effectively as a sedative or stimulant, to calm and soothe or to revive and invigorate. Whatever your mental or physical state, what you need is 'a nice cup of tea'.
> (312)

The importation of tea from India to Britain began in the 1650s. Until the early eighteenth century, tea could only be purchased in coffeehouses and was believed to be very beneficial for health and often marketed as a medicinal remedy. The beverage gained its popularity for private consumption by the late eighteenth century (Fromer 5). Due to its limited availability, it was associated with luxury, wealth, and upper-class status. Drinking tea was comparable to a celebration for these classes, with a nicely set table, rather expensive crockery and teapots–items the lower classes clearly could not afford. As Fromer mentions, English tea "necessitates a certain income level to purchase relatively expensive commodities, the social knowledge and manners to properly equip and set the tea table" (4). Availability increased by the early nineteenth century and tea culture entered the lifestyle of all classes in English society. In 1897, Crole emphasised the English passion for tea in numbers: "80,000,000 cups of tea are daily imbibed" in England (qtd. in Fromer 5). It became a symbol for status, a fashion, and constant tradition, and a social act informed by rituals–with a special tea time to bring everyone in the house together

(ibid.: 6f.). Accompanied, and formalised, by these rituals, tea was "flexible enough to [...] serve as a shared cultural symbol between groups within the English nation" (12).

## Gardening

> Tiny scraps of land, which almost anywhere else in the world would be regarded as too insignificant to bother with, are treated as though they were grand country estates. Our moats and drawbridges may be imaginary, but every Englishman's castle has its miniature 'grounds'.
> (Fox 125)

Gardening is perceived by Fox as "probably the most popular hobby in the country – at the last count, over two-thirds of the population were described as 'active gardeners'" (ibid. 129, no source for count given). Gelfert refers to gardens as a "Kulturerzeugnis, das seitdem [the 18th century] mit dem Adjektiv englisch weltweit zu einem festen Begriff geworden ist, dem englischen Garten", which is closely connected to the English home (140). According to Fox's observations, the English garden is a place to relax, enjoy privacy and a cup of tea, and to discuss the latest weather forecast, although the latter is clearly intended to be a humorous reference to the previously mentioned stereotype (129). The English desire for privacy is an important motivation for their garden culture, and many houses have both, front gardens and back gardens, but their owners will almost exclusively be found in their back-gardens, hidden by fences and hedges, where nobody can disturb their solitude (208, 128).

Although the English devote more time and effort into their gardens than many other nations, Fox suggests that their world-wide perception as "a 'nation of gardeners'" can be better justified by their love and passion for gardening than their actual gardening skills (129). Until the early eighteenth century, French and Italian ornamental gardens were an inspiration; every single bush was fashioned into a piece of art. Soon, the landscape garden became more popular, with natural and unspoiled looks (Gelfert 142). Quest-Ritson (qtd. in Fox 131) identifies the English garden as a symbol for economic and social status: "It is all about social aspirations, lifestyles, money and class". Fox observes differences between the classes in the way they design their gardens. Lower-class gardens usually display more colours and are over-neatly organised, whereas upper-class gardens express a more

tendentious naturalness, concealing the effort put into them (132f.), thus deferring to the previously mentioned rule of understatement.

Furthermore, English gardening culture has its economic roots. Due to the agricultural surplus of wheat in the 18th century, more and more gin was produced and sold in London's streets, which led to a crisis, and even an increase of the mortaility rate in London's population. Consequently, gin production was brought to a near halt and resulting unused cropland was transformed into parks and gardens (Gelfert 146).

**Inventions**

England is furthermore perceived as the land of inventions by virtue of its developed sports, like soccer, mountaineering, hockey, modern horse-racing, and tennis. They set standard distances for running, swimming and rowing competitions, and formulated rules for skiing. Furthermore, they invented goalposts, racing boats, stopwatches, computers, television, Christmas cards, modern insurance, detective novels, steam, modern tourism, even the first modern luxury hotel. The list continues (Paxman 63, 195). Numerous industrial revolutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth century made England a manufacturing country, with new inventions and improvements (Oakland 52). Its dominant position in the world made it possible for England to spread and enforce its ideas. Not only was it America that had a significant influence on the Empire in the late 19th century; one should not forget that it was the English colonists who founded this nation-state. They set the English language as standard, and introduced the financial and industrial system, along with the framework of American politics and law. All these structures are essential in today's United States (Haseler 91).

However, with the decline of the Empire, they also lost their influential power. Haseler argues that the central reason for this was the anti-scientific and pre-industrial gentlemen culture of the twentieth century (74).

**2.2.3 English Class Society and Superiority**

> "Remember that you are an Englishman, and have consequently won first prize in the lottery of life."
> (Cecil Rhodes, referred to in Paxman 66, no detailed source given)

Gelfert mentions two reasons why today's English society is still perceived as 'class-ridden': First, in England, people's accents, brogues and vernaculars still reveal much information vis-à-vis their social status, due to the BBC's politics of language (as mentioned above, RP was marketed as the accent to be aspired to), any deviating English accent spoken in London is still perceived as a marker of lower social class (Gelfert 102). Gelfert, however, observed these linguistic class markers more than 20 years ago. Almost 10 years later, regionals accents had become more acceptable; more TV and radio commentators spoke in regional accents, and were now perceived as attractive. But Kate Fox was not convinced:

> [...] it does not prove that the class associations of regional accents have somehow disappeared. We may like a regional accent, and even find it delightful, melodious and charming, while still recognising it as clearly working class. If what is really meant is that being working class has become more acceptable in many formerly snobby occupations [i.e. presenter in TV or radio shows], then this is what should be said, rather than a lot of mealy-mouthed polite euphemisms about regional accents.
> (Fox 75)

Members of the upper class tend to regard their way of talking as 'correct', since it is intelligible and clear, and the lower classes' less intelligible pronunciation and choice of words as 'incorrect', in a rather 'lazy' and unclear manner (73)[2]. It is important to appreciate that while pronunciation might be a marker of social class, it is not an indicator of economic status (i.e. money or occupation). Gelfert claims that any people who manage to disguise their 'lower-class accents' likelier gain access to better jobs or universities (102). This indicates the high importance of speech in English culture. Kate Fox notices how a person speaking with an upper-class accent, despite working in a lower-class occupation, will still be identified as belonging to the upper class and, conversely, their upper class associates will not be recognised as such if they speak like members of the lower class. Bernstein conducted research on the connection between social class and language. He viewed the difference of speech between the classes as a reflection of the English class system and argued that speakers of a less dominant accent also had reduced chances of access to qualitative education (qtd. in Longhurst et al. 45f.). Language is, hence, "the medium

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[2] 2 See Fox (73-74) and Longhurst et al. (46) for an insightful analysis of upper, middle and working class pronunciation and speech

through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated" (Ashcroft et al. qtd. in Longhurst et al. 47).

The second reason for a class-ridden society is that, even today, the social structures of feudal times can be identified:

- Crown
- High Aristocracy (Duke, earl, viscount, etc.)
- Low Aristocracy (Knight, baronet)
- Bourgeois and peasants
  (Gelfert 102)

The higher-class status is accompanied by economic, social, and political power. Today's England does not have a feudal system. However, the social status groups still exist, commonly divided into upper class, upper and lower middle class, and upper and lower working class (102, 106). The monarch is above all. The monarchy is an older institution than any other in Britain. Today, the royal executive power is dissipated, but the monarch is nevertheless a strong symbol of Britishness, and–with the Queen's seat in London–especially of Englishness: "[...] the monarch personifies the British state and is a symbol of national unity,", and, furthermore, the monarchy "shows stability and continuity" and "has a certain glamour about it" (Oakland 81f.).

A more detailed categorisation of who belongs into which class is very difficult. It would be easiest to divide society into groups of income, however, a vicar earns less than a craftsman, but has a higher social status, as well as a professor having a lower income but higher status than a small businessmen. More detailed distinctions split the classes into even more divisions–for example the working class into skilled and unskilled workers (196). For this research project, however, the common categorisation from above will be suitable enough. In order to establish an idea of English identity, it is sufficient to know that English society has been–even if the gaps have decreased–class-ridden for a long time, and that the very nature of class distinction has changed: whereas class used to represent an economic status, it is now rather perceived as a matter of attitude and social practices (197). Richards draws attention to a further gap in society, namely "[...] the great divide within the working classes between what the Victorians called 'the rough' and the 'respectable'" (18). The former preferred activities such as sex, drinking and violent behaviour, the

latter, however, shared values with the middle-classes: "self-improvement, education, restraint, thrift, [and] good manners" (ibid.).

Social classes are closely associated with another significant characteristic of Englishness: the sense of superiority. Ogden Nash claimed that the English were convinced of belonging "to the most exclusive club there is" (qtd. in Paxman 69). Higson believes, "to be born English was to have drawn 'the top card in life' (1). Paxman argues that the British empire, ruled by the English, got its self-esteem through the erroneous belief of being driven by a "God-ordained duty to go out and colonize those places unfortunate enough not to have been born under the flag". The empires absolute belief in their own superiority "became an article of faith" (165). British ideals were spread in the colonies, amongst them, "the myth of the Empire 'family' and the benevolence of its 'head', Britain" (Tönnies and Viol 99). Stephen Haseler describes the political situation in the colonies as easy for the English colonists. There was no class distinction, no middle class attempting to gain power, or any other dangers to the well-established class system, because the inhabitants were of a different ethnicity and, therefore, inferior. He ascribes this sense of superiority specifically to the English upper classes, but also acknowledges that this is a characteristic shown by any imperial ruling group. This sense of superiority was even strengthened by any contact with the colonies (Haseler 37f.): "The English did not mix, they conquered, and then ruled". English superiority showed itself as "a general prejudice in favour of English and white racial superiority" (38). Robert Colls argued that imperialism awoke a new view of Englishness, one that is associated with "race, language and custom", and possessing superior rights (qtd. in Haseler 40). Imperialism made Englishmen into rulers who had to be trained in the art of leadership, becoming trusted men who set standards of behaviour and led by personal example (Haseler 40). Englishness was the country's 'official' idea of itself; a status the middle and working classes strived after (46).

A central role in establishing a superior ideology of Englishness was the creation of a standardised upper-class accent, nowadays known as RP (Received Pronunciation). It was spread through public schools in the late nineteenth century and proposed "as a new 'suitable' accent for imperial rulers" (44). BBC was a powerful medium to further distribute the accent, and in the 1920s it sanctioned standardisation. Should any person want to advance themselves in politics,

economics or the social spheres, they would have to acquire this accent, also referred to as 'The Queen's English' (Longhurst et al. 27). Although the major characteristic of a language is its variability and hence, language changes continuously, "people steadfastly believe that a homogenous, standardized, one-size-fits-all language is not only desirable, it is truly a possibility" (Lippi-Green 44). Action reduction classes were taken in order to lessen an accent, but such courses were certainly not able to fully remove it from society (50). Politicians like Margaret Thatcher even took elocution lessons. RP, as a major part of Englishness, was soon spread amongst the broader population. It worked as an important factor that allured to belonging and nationalism, with the purpose of securing the new ideology of imperial Englishness within the country (Haseler 45). This standardisation of the English language was furthermore intended to control variation and consequently prevent language change (Lippi-Green 10). RP, however, became more of a myth representing Englishness than an actual reality, with comparatively few people speaking it nowadays. This can be seen especially in the triumph of regional accents, such as Northern accents or London's Cockney English (Haseler 117). Lippi-Green calls this phenomenon "myth of non-accent". She agrees with Milroy and Milroy that a standardised language is "an idea in the mind rather than a reality – a set of abstract norms to which actual usage may conform to a greater or lesser extent" (22f., qtd. in Lippi-Green 41). Perhaps, it was the superiority associated with RP that was also the reason for its decreasing success. This superiority was not accessible for everyone. Until today, there is no concept of the 'English Dream' like there is of the 'American Dream'. Englishness did indeed invoke power for the English, but only for a few, due to class divisions (71). To propagate Englishness as a unifying force, however, ensured that it was not officially perceived as something exclusively available to the higher classes. It therefore helped to conceal the stark class distinctions of the times preceding the First World War (46).

The power of the Empire was constantly represented in mass media, and images of the "innate superiority of white English" were produced and propagated. Through the Empire, the working classes had an opportunity to feel superior to others as well (48). With the decolonisation of the Empire came the invention of the Commonwealth, "the mythic notion of Britain as 'the centre of the Commonwealth of Nations'" (Haseler 66), and this powerful belief in superiority continued despite the

Empire's decline. Compared to the economic and political progress of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Britain had fallen economically below France, Germany and the United States by 1980. Nevertheless, it was Winston Churchill who argued that only the English-speaking people could rule the world (qtd. in Haseler 65), and forty years later, Prime Minister Major even left out the United States and claimed that "The United Kingdom - the greatest cradle of culture and academic and scientific and political achievement in modern times [...] is the highest cause this party knows" (qtd. in Haseler 65).

## 2.3 Limitations

"The English are a relatively mixed people, their customs, accents and behaviour vary considerably, and local identification is still strong" (Oakland 63). For example, the Cornish associate themselves rather with the Celtic cultures in Britain and the northern English and southern English are both convinced of their superiority to one another (ibid.). Wallwork and Dixon investigated that English do associate with such common values mentioned above, however, they even more do so with an identity rooted in a specific place (35). It is possible that people of a group can associate with its group identity as a whole, but still decide for themselves which elements of this identity to accept or deny.

Nevertheless, even if one argues that the topics mentioned above are stereotypical representations, they have nevertheless occurred in so many different sources, and must therefore be what is commonly believed and accepted, by both foreigners and English themselves. Consequently, it is exactly these narratives that will be most likely found in the media, and hence can be used as a guideline to identify markers of Englishness in Disney movies.

## 3 ENGLISHNESS DISNEYFIED

The term "Disnification" was first introduced by Schickel in 1968, in the thesis at hand it will henceforth be spelled 'Disneyfication', as the company's name is contained within. The noun describes the alteration of stories according to Disney's intentions, ideologies, and marketing purposes. Furthermore, content is disneyfied in order to attract a specific audience (Gorini 67f.).

Disney's goal is "maximum comfort for the audience", which is why the company stresses happiness in their animations by creating an "illusion of reality which is deeply rooted in close observation of the real world" (Di Giovanni 207). Disney address viewers who have little to no knowledge about all the cultures in the world, therefore, culture need to be represented similar to reality, but also in a way that it fits Disney's agenda. Therefore, "representations of the Other are necessarily smoothed and simplified by the selection of exotic elements which are well-known to the Western world" (Di Giovanni 211). Consequently, the process of Disneyfication does not only involve change, but also simplifications that correspond to US American and Western paradigms. These simplifications often occur by means of stereotypical representations. A "limited set of stereotypes" are used and "flanked by virtually no other reference to the cultures portrayed and" additionally supported by US American cultural values (Di Giovanni 96). As these films are subjective and simplified, children can relate to them. However, this could develop them to children with a self-centred worldview in which they can only explain the Other by means of comparison to themselves (Ayres and Hines 9).

Marketing processes further solidify Disneyfication. With regard to English identity, it can be viewed as one process to create what Haseler calls a "theme-park Englishness" or "'Englishness for export'". He argues that English identity, as an "English product" is sold worldwide, becoming an important part of the leisure and tourist industry. This product is marketed as a lifestyle, thereby explaining to the audience how they could achieve Englishness (Haseler 57). After the war, an "era of Hollywood Englishness" began, with the mass media selling an image of "the stiff upper lip, wartime grit, twee country cottages, grand country-house shooting parties, and the upstairs-downstairs world of Lords, Ladies, butlers and chamber-maids" (Higson 3). During the industrial times, mass media brought popular images of Englishness to the English population, creating a sense of shared culture (Haseler 124). Through media and the travel business, this specific image was sent abroad where it was reproduced and spread as the world's perception of Englishness (Higson 3). Culture, therefore, "is the battleground for identity", and cinema and television have been especially crucial "in defining, mythifying and disseminating national identity" (Richards, *Introduction*). Disneyfication does the same–it 'mythifies' films and the identities depicted in a very typical Disney-style: it adds magic, love

stories, and fantasy, and thereby emphasises the positives and whitewashes the negatives. Lippi-Green summarises myth "broadly as a story with general cultural significance" (41). Myths illustrate structures of power which we take for natural. Recipients of myth tend to take such structures at their face value and do not question why they exist. Disneyfication creates a magic world, a "wish-landscape that combines fantasy, fun, and the opportunity to enter into a more colourful and imaginary world" (Giroux 6), in which past cruelties or negative ambitions can easily be forgotten.

The films dealt with in this paper were produced in a different time than when the stories are based. Hence, there may be two concepts of Englishness apparent: One of the story time and the other one of the production time. The second one should not be detected in the story, however, I argue that Disney might have been influenced by somewhat modern advancements of national identity. Oakland explains that "[f]oreigners often have either specific notions of what they think the British are like or, in desperation, seek a unified picture or national character, based sometimes upon quaint traditions or theme-park and tourist views of Britain" (66). Walt Disney was himself a tourist and it will be interesting to analyse how he and his studio team perceived, represented, and thereby disneyfied Englishness in their films.

## 4 POCAHONTAS

| Directors | Mike Gabriel, Eric Goldberg |
|---|---|
| Producer | James Pentecost |
| Release Year | 1995 |
| Length | 81 minutes |
| Setting | Virginia, 17th century |

**Table 1 "Pocahontas / Key Information"**
Data retrieved from <http://www.imdb.com> May 10th,2016.

## 4.1 Plot Summary

In 1607, The Virginia Company sends Captain John Smith, Governor Ratcliffe and other English settlers to North America where they are supposed to search for gold

on behalf of the king. Meanwhile in North America, princess Pocahontas is asked to marry the soldier Kocoum, whom she does not love, and seeks advice from the talking tree spirit, Grandmother Willow. When the settlers arrive, they immediately start digging for gold. John Smith, however, explores the territory and soon meets Pocahontas, who has followed him out of curiosity. Pocahontas shows John her world and teaches him not to think of people who are different as "savages". She also informs him that there is no gold to be found. A war starts after her father, Chief Powhatan, has asked warriors from other tribes of the nation to help fight the unwelcome new arrivals. Governor Ratcliffe announces his intention to eliminate the natives "once and for all". That night, Pocahontas and John Smith secretly meet at Grandmother Willow's tree. Kocoum watches them kiss and tries to kill John. However, John's friend Thomas has followed them and shoots Kocoum to save John. The Powhatans capture John, thinking he has killed Kocoum, and set his execution for dawn. However, Pocahontas throws herself over John and tells her father that she loves him and that the tribe should not choose the path of hatred. This results in a declaration of peace between the natives and the settlers. Only Ratcliffe fires at Pocahontas' father, but John pushes him aside and is hurt instead. He returns to England for medical treatment. Ratcliffe is captured and sent back to England where he is to be tried for treason.

## 4.2 Historical Sources vs The Disney Version

The film is based on a true story of the English settlers in the 17th century, their relationship to the Powhatans and Pocahontas's central mediating role between the settlers and her tribe. The main plot is to some extent similar to what happened according to historical sources (see Edwards, Woodward, Oberg). The settlers did arrive on behalf of the Virginia Company in 1607, and there were indeed two settlers named Robert Ratcliffe and John Smith on board. John Smith and Pocahontas became friends and she also taught him her language, and vice versa, being, indeed, a very inquisitive person.

However, there were major differences. In total, three ships arrived in Jamestown–this was the name of the settlement, which later became Virginia–and before the English settled there, the "New World" had already been subject to

colonisation for at least one century. In the film, however, the audience is lured into the wrong belief that the English were the front runners to discover the New World.

When John Smith settled in Jamestown, Pocahontas was only ten years old, while he was already 26. Their love affair only exists in the film, in which they are both adults. This is a typical example of the process of 'Disneyfication'. Their affair made the story more exciting and dramatic, and added a central theme that recurs in most Disney films: love. In reality, their relationship was of a different nature. To understand it, one must appreciate what situation the settlers found themselves in after they had arrived in Jamestown. For many years, the Powhatans and other tribes in the area had experienced unpleasant situations with colonists. Many natives died in several conflicts, whilst others died having contracted illnesses brought overseas by the colonists. Consequently, their attitude towards the English was rather hostile, which made it difficult for them to live in Jamestown in the beginning.

Fourteen days after the English arrived there was a more serious confrontation with the Powhatans, who attacked their camp, killing some of the settlers (Woodward 7-10). However, Oberg argues that the Powhatans were generous and trying to help wherever they could, unless being threatened or disappointed by ungrateful behaviour (37-38).

Pocahontas was attracted by the different lifestyle, the buildings and the way the English were dressed. John Smith knew that it was important to communicate with the natives successfully and therefore asked Pocahontas to teach him some words in her language. She also taught him sign language, such as when she put her left hand to her heart and lifted up her right hand, a sign that meant either "I tell the truth", "I promise" or "I am your friend". In the film, she teaches John the sign and word for "Hello" and "Goodbye". She also made sure that the settlers were provided with enough food to survive. In return, John taught her the English language and customs. Her role in mediating between her tribe and the colonisers became vital for the settlers' survival and progress. Their relationship developed, then, as a result of the conflicts, through the necessity to communicate with the natives, and in order to better understand their way of life: not because of romantic interest (Woodward 32-36).

These conflicts between the settlers and the natives are also part of Disney's film, but clearly less graphic, since Disney's target audience comprises children, who

should not be confronted with extreme violence. Different, however, is the way the character of the Powhatans is represented. In the film, they seem to be generally peaceful, except for when they feel threatened. They apparently had lived a peaceful life until the settlers arrived, apart from when they were attacked by rival tribes. This is another instance of Disneyfication, in which the dark sides of a culture are concealed as much as possible and the positive sides emphasised. In truth, chief Powhatan violently expanded his territory, suppressed other tribes and was anything but a kind leader. His subjects were scared of him on the one hand, but admired him on the other. In the film, he is friendly, always smiling, and when he returns from a battle with a tribe that has threatened his people, the shaman Kekata tells him: "Your return has brought much joy to the village. Look at all the smiling faces" (07:18). Despite our learning of only one daughter in the film, chief Powhatan had several wives and children in reality. Pocahontas was his favourite and was granted greater privileges than the others.

Additionally, Disney incorporated US American values into the Native American's culture. In the film, Pocahontas suffers under the prospect of her arranged marriage with Kocoum. Whereas the native women were not hierarchically subordinated and allowed to choose themselves whom to marry, Disney's version positioned their culture into a system "of patriarchy, property, and nuclear family repeated at the core of American national identity" (Edwards 156).

Disney was more accurate with the physical depiction of the natives. They were dressed in loincloths made from animal skins, with some wearing pelts around their shoulders, including animal heads and tails. Most men put feathers in their hair and animal teeth around their necks, women wore jewellery, and many natives had tattoos (Woodward 16-18). Walt Disney traveled frequently to Europe in order to collect new sources of inspiration, in 1935 he brought about 350 books back to the United States, he collected paintings and other pieces of art, all of which inspired him and the artists working for the Disney company (Girveau 21-38). The producers of Pocahontas thus were probably inspired by paintings and reports by English settlers from the 17th century when they drew their characters, which can be seen in the pictures below.

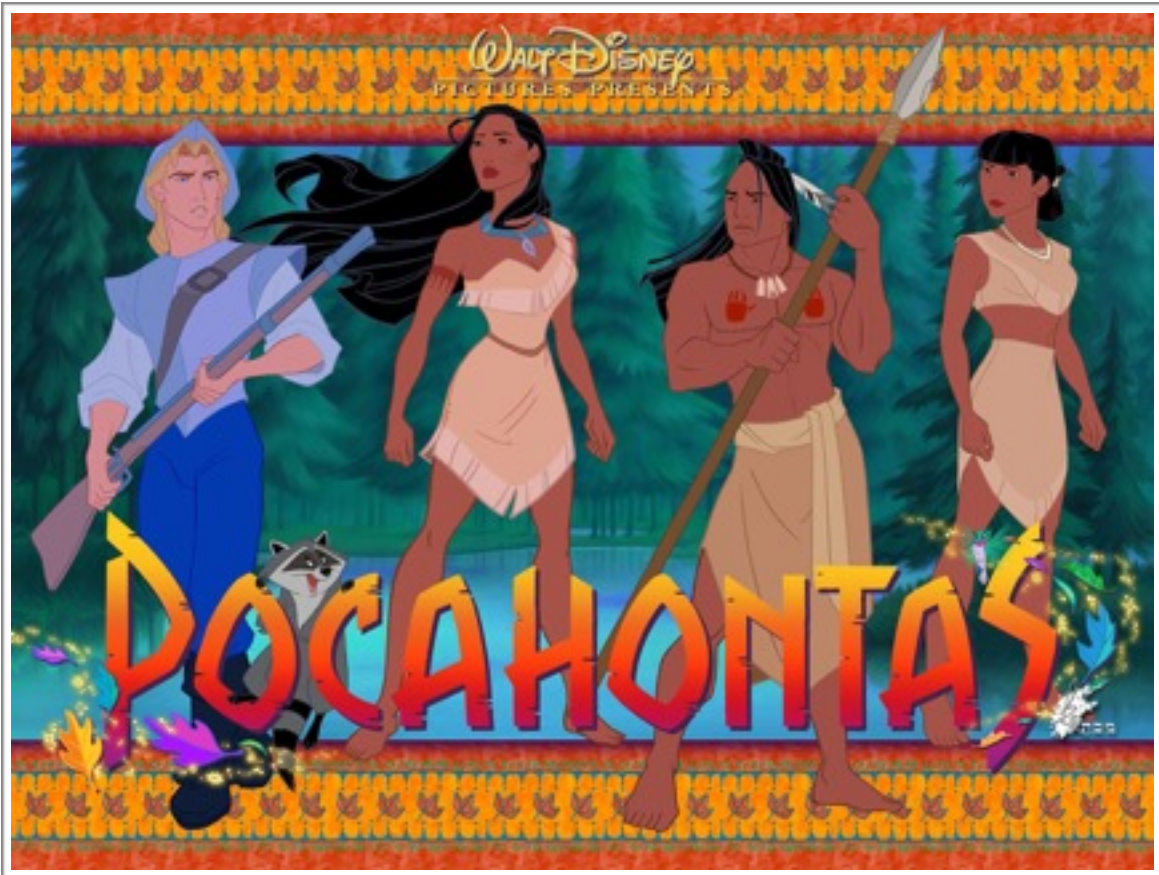**Figure 1 "John Smith, Pocahontas, Kocoum and Nakoma"**



**Figure 2  "Kekata and Chief Powhatan"**

In the first picture, John Smith, Pocahontas, Kocoum and Pocahontas's friend Nakoma are depicted. Pocahontas has a tattoo on her right arm and wears her mother's necklace, with Nakoma also wearing a necklace. Kocoum wears a loincloth, a necklace and feathers and has two tattoos on his chest. Pocahontas' father, as depicted in the second picture, adorns himself with a feather crown, animal skins and a necklace too. The Powhatans customarily painted their skin, which they also do in the film, particularly before battles (as can be seen in the song *Savages*).

In the finale of Pocahontas, John Smith is captured and Pocahontas saves his life, and the same thing seem to have happened to Smith, as he describes in his book *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles*. Smith was brought to chief Powhatan, who, together with a priest, decided that he should be sacrificed to their god. Pocahontas took John's head in her arms and put her own head on his in order to save him; the same gesture as in the film, but without the love story behind it. Chief Powhatan acknowledged the wish of his favourite daughter and, furthermore, adopted John as a member of his tribe (48f.). Historians, however, believe that Smith misunderstood the Powhatan's intentions. It was only a mock execution meant as a special adoption ritual, and likely inspired by chief Powhatan's underlying intentions to subordinate John Smith (Edwards 150). There was nothing that indicated that Smith's life was endangered, as he was treated like a respected person and invited to many feasts (Oberg 37).

Even though Disney hired Native Americans to gain more authenticity, some Native American activists criticised the film for its historical and cultural misrepresentation: "In answer to a complaint by the Powhatan Nation, he [Disney] claims the film is 'responsible, accurate, and respectful'. We of the Powhatan Nation disagree. The film distorts history beyond recognition. Our offers to assist Disney with cultural and historical accuracy were rejected. […] the history, as recorded by the English themselves, is badly falsified in the name of 'entertainment'" (Powhatan Renape Nation). What the Powhatans describe here, is exactly what the term 'Disneyfication' refers to: Disney removed the darkest sides of a real story, whitewashed it and turned it into a love story to appropriate it to their intended audience and to entertain them.

## 4.3 Englishness and Stereotypical Behaviour

### 4.3.1 English Superiority: Imperialism

Most present in *Pocahontas* is the topic of imperialism, something that is closely connected to English history and the sense of superiority. According to the *Dictionary of Human Geography* (Gregory), imperialism is "an unequal human and territorial relationship, usually in the form of an empire, based on ideas of superiority and practices of dominance, and involving the extension of authority and control of one state or people over another". The two unequally depicted cultures in *Pocahontas* are the Powhatans and the English settlers from London. Imperialism as defined above, is displayed by the settlers in the film. The depiction of the Powhatans as savages in need of help creates a situation ready for English intervention in the interest of establishing order and improving the Native American way of life. In 1607, when the Virginia Company of London sent English settlers to America, they told them to treat the Native Americans well and hoped that the natives could "abandon and set aside their savagery" and "would willingly do so when presented with the English example" (Oberg 37). These intentions are portrayed in the film.

The following conversation between John and Pocahontas, and the song *Colors Of The Wind* [3] build the central scene (36:00) to represent English imperialism.

Pocahontas: I'd like to see those things.
John: You will.
P: How?
J: We're going to build them here. We'll show your people how to use this land properly, how to make the most of it.
P: Make the most of it?
J: Yes. We'll build roads and decent houses.
P: Our houses are fine!
J: You think that. Only because you don't know any better. […] There is so much we can teach you. We've improved the lives of savages all over the world.
P: Savages?
J: Not that you're a savage.
P: Just my people?
J: No. Listen, that's not what I meant. Let me explain that. […] Savage is just a word, you know, a term for people who are uncivilised.

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[3] all lyrics in this thesis are retrieved from: lyricsmode.com/lyrics/p/pocahontas

P: Like me.
J: Well, when I say uncivilised, what I mean is… is…
P: What you mean is not like you.

In the *Colors of The Wind*, Pocahontas criticises this view:

> 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?
>
> You think you own whatever land you land on,
> The earth is just a dead thing you can claim
> […]
>
> You think the only people who are people,
> Are the people who look and think like you.
> But if you walk the footsteps of a stranger,
> You'll learn things you never knew.

Under the false pretence of only wanting to help, modernise and make the lives of 'savages' better, the English built colonies all over the world. This portrays the English as the dominant nationality in the film because they think of the indigenous peoples as individuals in need of help and want to improve their lives, without even asking whether they might not already be happy with it. Neither do they consider the fact that they could learn from them too. Only much later in the film, John Smith finds out: "They are not savages, they can help us. They know the land. They know how to navigate the rivers" (51:10). Earlier, however, he exhibits every characteristic of an imperialist. According to the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, a 'savage' is "a person whose way of life is at a very early stage of development", and 'uncivilised"'describes anything "below the usual standards of Western society". For John Smith and the other English, the natives' way of life is different and unusual, and since it is unlike the English lifestyle, it must necessarily be bad. Even for the heroic protagonist, Smith, it is difficult to accept that any other way of life could be equally satisfying.

Another allusion to imperialism is when Kekata describes the English as wolves who consume everything in their path (22:35), and immediately after the colonists' arrival, Ratcliffe plants the British flag in the ground and claims the land in the name of the King, naming the new colony 'Jamestown' (23:00). He calls America

"the free world", but as soon as he arrives, its freedom is in jeopardy. He wants the settlers to shoot any natives they come across because it is his land and his gold.

Another strong device to establish the nature of the relationship between the two nationalities is the way the various characters refer to each other. Categorisation is often used as a way to establish hierarchies, and 'naming', the process of how one refers to another, denotes differences and creates different levels of power via language.

|  | **For the English** | **For the Native Americans** |
|---|---|---|
| **By the English** | Ratcliffe:<br>the finest crew England has to offer<br>witless peasants<br>fools<br>boys<br><br>Various characters:<br>the men | Ratcliffe:<br>bloodthirsty savages<br>filthy heathens<br>insolent heathens<br>murderous thieves<br>disgusting race<br><br>Various characters:<br>Indians<br>savages<br>the natives<br>dirty redskin devils<br>demons<br>evil race |
| **By the Native Americans** | Chief Powhatan:<br>pale visitors<br>paleface<br>these beasts<br>dangerous white men<br>demon<br>killers<br><br>Kekata:<br>like strange beasts<br>like ravenous wolves<br><br>Kocoum:<br>these invaders<br>white demons<br><br>Various characters:<br>savages<br>devils | Pocahontas:<br>my people<br><br>Chief Powhatan:<br>my brothers |

**Table 2 "Names used for the English and Native Americans"**

Language "can be used to belittle [and] abuse" cultures, as it is "intrinsically linked to culture, identity and meaning" and hence, colonists used it consciously to reach their goals (Spencer 31). It is a meaning-making process to organise and classify others according to prior knowledge (Douglas qtd. in Hall, Representation 236). How groups of people are named is an important political and social issue. Many terms are perceived as a taboo due to a number of connotations they carry, and political correctness is not easy to fulfil (32). Language is consequently a "politically and culturally charged medium over which groups wrestle for control" (Longhurst 44), and naming a powerful device to do so. People have always represented the Other according to specific criteria like their historical past, certain behaviour or physical appearance (such as 'pale faces', or 'redskin devils') and they often did so by the use of nicknames (Rus 202). This powerful process of organising knowledge about the Other into categories can be well perceived in Pocahontas.

For both sides it is threatening that they differ widely in behaviour, opinion and lifestyle. Imperialist goals are threatened by the resistance of the natives; the Powhatans feel threatened by the settlers' intolerant behaviour. Interestingly, Chief Powhatan first refers to the settlers as "visitors", which carries a rather positive connotation. Only after he has found out what they are really there for, do he and his tribe start to give them more negative names. Especially in the song *Savages* there are parallels between what both nationalities think of each other. They emphasise that they feel endangered because the others are "not like you and me" and "different from us". Furthermore, they reduce each other to their physical appearance, especially skin colour, and seem to have prejudices because of their differing looks:

> [Ratcliffe]
> What can you expect from filthy little heathens?
> Their whole disgusting race is like a curse,
> their skin's a **hellish red**.
> They're only good when dead.
> […]
> [Settlers]
> Savages! Savages!
> [Ratcliffe]
> Barely even human.
> […]

They're **not like you and me**,
which means they must be evil.
[…]
[Powhatan]
This is what we feared,
the **paleface** is a demon.
[…]
[Kekata]
Beneath that **milky hide**,
there's emptiness inside.
[…]
They're **different from us**,
which means they can't be trusted.

Whereas John Smith, the other settlers, and the Powhatans accept these differences after a while, Governor Ratcliffe is not able to change his opinion, remaining the only proper villain of the story. Ward, also noticing the different degrees of villainy in the English characters, identifies Smith's friend Thomas as a "representative of innocent imperialism" and "part of an unenlightened group" (41). Thomas is depicted as an insecure, but congenial character, who has a lack of confidence and consequently does not dare to object to any orders. He does what he is told and is therefore, in contrast to Ratcliffe who gives the orders, shown as not directly responsible for any harm done to the Native Americans.

The name 'savages' is constantly used to refer to the Native Americans. It carries stereotypical, negative connotations, such as the following:

> Savages cry easily and are afraid of the dark; they are fond of pets and toys; they have weak wills and feeble reasoning powers; they are notoriously fickle and unreliable and exceedingly given to exaggeration of their own importance – in all of these particulars being much like the children of the higher races. (Moore 73, qtd. In Spencer 46)

This stereotypical image of a savage corresponds to the colonist attitudes noted by Cornell and Murphy, in which the colonised are perceived as less intelligent and in need to be taught the empire's knowledge and worldview (423):

> Colonization inevitably involves the identification of the colonized as below the boundary of the human, as beast, as animal, as savage. The colonized are other to humanity; humanity then has been substantiated by the figure of the colonizer and with this figure the most schocking forms of brutality.

By using the term 'savage' to refer to the natives, the English portray themselves as superior and reduce the natives to less important and less powerful beings who have to be shown the right way. Other hierarchical connotations are carried by the adjectives Ratcliffe utilises: 'bloodthirsty', 'filthy', 'insolent', 'murderous', and 'disgusting' further reduce the natives to a less valuable ethnicity, more similar to animals than humans ('filthy' is often used to describe animals). Interestingly, Ratcliffe calls the Native Americans 'insolent', which seems inappropriate, as it is the English settlers who are invading the homeland of the natives, but still Ratcliffe considers it as impertinent of them to hide their gold, which they do not even have, and not to negotiate properly.

The settlers also use the term 'race' twice, which is critical as it carries rather negative connotations too (Spencer 41). It is usually used to categorise humans into groups corresponding to their physical appearance and especially emphasises the biological distinction between 'black', 'yellow', and 'white' and the myth of white dominance whereas 'ethnicity' is mostly used to describe a cultural distinction (Longhurst et al. 80). This myth of white dominance describes the "popular view of the inherent morality and civilised virtue of the 'white race'" (Spencer 51), which hence gives the English an excuse, and even an entitlement, to invade other countries and impose their own values on the subordinate inhabitants, all under the pretence of only wanting the best for the natives.

Language is furthermore used to establish a distance between the colonists (representing Western believes) and 'the Other'. When Smith and Pocahontas first meet, she does not understand English and speaks Algonquian to him. However, after she has been listen to her heart, communication suddenly works. Di Giovanni interprets this as a reference to imperialism:

> […] speaking English, hence being willing to give up one's own language and culture, is the key to being understood, considered, cared for. As it happened in colonial times, when the British conquered new territories and imposed their language and social order, English still appears to be a powerful tool in the management of cultural difference through contemporary media.
> (109)

Additionally to the already mentioned means of representation, the animals in the film symbolise the two nationalities, as well as their relationship between them.

Pocahontas' friend Meeko, the raccoon, resembles the natives and nature. He collects his own food, cares for himself and knows how to survive in the wild. Percy, Governor Ratcliffe's dog is the exact opposite of him, signifying the Western world's values of being civilised and modern. The spoilt dog takes baths, has his own servants, eats selected food like cherries and nicely presented bones. To choose a dog as Ratcliffe's pet is also interesting in the way that apparently many people from the US "think that the English are crazy about dogs", as a result from a survey by Project Britain shows (Project Britain, *English Stereotypes*). Percy's relationship to Meeko exhibits the relationship between the Native Americans and the English. He has no knowledge about living in the wild and is very confused when he first encounters Meeko. Since he has not made any experiences in these new surrounding and does not know how to deal with the new circumstances, he feels endangered by the unknown and especially by cheeky Meeko. Therefore, he attacks and chases him whenever they meet, in order to get the situation under control, just like the imperialists behave when they first encounter natives.

Not only do the animals stand for the nationalities, they also depict central characteristics of the person they relate to most closely. Percy is spoilt and proud, he does not want to share with anyone and is very aggressive. He resembles Ratcliffe for a long time, however, in contrast to him, Percy eventually accepts the other nationality and even becomes friends with Meeko. Then, he adopts other characteristics and dresses up like a Native American. Meeko, on the other hand, shares certain features with Pocahontas. Both are very curious and also cheeky. Pocahontas, as well as Meeko, seek to learn everything about the visitors and always try to get closer to them.

The most salient icon for the British empire is the occurrence of the Union Jack, which was proclaimed by King James in 1606, therefore only a year before the English arrived in America. On this flag, the Scottish and English cross were combined. In the first few minutes, the Union Jack can be seen several times, once on a tower in London and once on the ship of the Virginia Company, and many times on the settler's long journey to America. The flag is particularly often shown when the settlers sing and talk about killing Indians, as if to remind the viewer that these people were English to dissociate Disney from any racist intentions. The flag becomes a powerful symbol for imperialism as soon as they have arrived in the "New

World". Ratcliffe plants the flag in the ground and claims the land to be his. This unambiguous gesture is shown a second time in the song *Mine, Mine, Mine*.

The criticism of English imperialism by means of language, icons, and symbols is strongly present as a continuous theme, as can be seen from the conversations above and the soundtrack. It is the most obvious representation of Englishness, however, there are other parts of English identity that are very often used in a humorous way which consequently helps to relieve the tension built by the imperialistic violence in the film.

### 4.3.2 The Ideal of the English Gentleman

Furthermore, the English are presented as people who desire an honourable reputation. Ratcliffe, in particular, is concerned about his success in Jamestown, as he is not very popular at court. To Wiggins he says: "The men like Smith, don't they? I've never been popular. And don't think I don't know what those backstabbers at court say about me. I'm very well aware that this is my last chance for glory" (18:24). In the song *Mine, Mine, Mine*, he hopes to increase England's power and reputation by finding gold, which "will dwarf" the Spanish. For himself, he dreams of being loved by "the ladies at court" and the king, who will greatly reward him for his glory, and will knight him, if not make him a lord, and even build a shrine. Reputation was apparently also an important factor when the crew was hired, which is shown by the following conversation between Ratcliffe and Wiggins (17:42):

> Wiggins: Do you think we meet some savages?
> Ratcliffe: If we do, we shall be sure to give them our proper English greeting.
> Wiggins: Uh, gift baskets!
> Ratcliffe: And he came so highly recommended...

The last sentence is repeated by Wiggins when Ratcliffe is put in irons and taken back to London. Not only Ratcliffe, but also the other settlers dream of glory, which they sing about in *The Virginia Company* after they have set sail: "We sail the open sea for glory, God and gold". These so-called "three Gs" were once the main imperialist motives for going overseas (Lockard 2008). Before the English arrive in America, Wiggins gives Ratcliffe's dog, Percy, a bath and while he scrubs him, he explains: "We must be all squeaky clean for the new world" (23:18), as if it were

highly important to look groomed when they met the natives. This cleanness might be used as a symbol to contrast the "civilised" English to the "uncivilised savages".

John Smith is the hero of the story, the resemblance of the English gentleman. He is brave, honest, modest, and polite: within the first few minutes, he saves Thomas from drowning in the sea. Whatever happens, he never gives up and always seems to be brave and strong on the outside, reacting to misfortunes with jokes and the stereotypical English stiff upper lip. Shortly before his execution he is tied to a pole, when Pocahontas comes to apologise to him. His words are: "[Sorry] For what? This? I've gotten out of worse scrapes than this… Can't think of any right now, but...". As soon as she is gone, though, he hangs his head. This scene represents English modesty very well. As Fox notes, "chronic illness must be described as 'a bit of a nuisance'; [and] a truly horrific experience is 'well, not exactly what I would have chosen'" (67), thus, the rules of understatement and irony are applied in this scene. Smith is also Disney's typical "Prince Charming": "I'd rather die tomorrow than live a hundred years without knowing you".

The English gentleman culture is further presented through another scene with Wiggins. In one scene he suggests making gift baskets for the natives and has them prepared already. As a visitor it is common to bring a gift when invited to somebody's home, and despite not having been invited to the natives' home, the nevertheless "visit" it, and this gift basket would have been a sign of English politeness and etiquette.

### 4.3.3 English Class Society
Icons of English class society especially occur in the song *Mine, Mine, Mine*, where Ratcliffe can be seen at court. There are guards in blue armours standing aside while Ratcliffe walks down the steps on a red carpet. The "ladies at court" he sings about, wear elegant long gowns, probably from Elizabethan times with collars, tight corsets, and petticoats, supported by the Spanish farthingale, which is the layer underneath to gradually widen the gown towards the hem. The men wear breeches and doublets with collars. Most men and women wear hats with feathers and other decorative accessories. They present upper class society, luxury and wealth, and therefore everything Ratcliffe longs for. King James I. is stood in front of his luxurious looking throne in gold and red, wearing a typical King's cape also in red and gold with a white seam. He uses his sceptre to lord Ratcliffe who kneels down in front of him.

The colours most present in this scene are red and purple. Both colours are often associated with royalty, power, and wealth. Governor Ratcliffe also wears clothes in purple with a red cape. Ratcliffe's coach is purple as well and Percy usually sits on a purple pillow.

### 4.3.4 English Stereotypical Behaviour and Lifestyle

**Humour**

Though imperialism is the most obvious of the English narratives represented in Pocahontas, there are other parts of English identity which are established by verbal representation. English humour is stereotypically perceived as dry and sarcastic (see section 2.2.2). This type of humour can be found in three different scenes.

After John Smith has rescued Thomas, he dryly says: "Well, that was refreshing" (03:40). In the end, after he has been hurt by a gunshot, Pocahontas offers him a liquid of Grandmother Willow's bark, which is supposed to help against pain. Smith replies: "What pain? I've had worse pain than this", despite looking very affected by his injuries. He finishes his sentence with exactly the same thing he said when he was tied to a pole before his execution: "Can't think of any right now, but...", trying to distract himself with a slight glimpse of humour. Humour in uncomfortable settings–sometimes known as 'gallows humour'–can can help to improve the situation at least a bit. Another instance is a conversation between Ratcliffe and Wiggins, in which Ratcliffe asks him whether he can think of any reason why the natives might have attacked them. Wiggins states the obvious, but with a rather sarcastic tone: „Because we invaded their land and cut down their trees and dug up their earth?" (42:55), knowing that Ratcliffe's answer would of course be a different one.

**Inventions**

The natives demonstrate a strong spiritual affinity for nature, talk to animals, and believe in magic and spirits. They go fishing, work on plantations and have rituals such as colouring their skin, arranged marriage (Kocoum and Pocahontas should marry according to the wishes of the chief), dancing, sending smoke signals, and having feasts. Their shaman Kekata heals wounds and conjures images from smoke to acquire information about the settlers. The English, however, are very advanced in

the sense of modernity. Unlike the Powhatans, they have industrial weapons "that spit fire and thunder" (as Kekata sees it in the smoke, 22:26), and a ship that looks like "strange clouds" to Pocahontas, since she only knows canoes (17:22). They show no respect for nature, as Governor Ratcliffe lets the settlers cut down trees and excavate the earth in search of gold. John's description of "the big village", London, further emphasises the differences with America: London's streets are filled with carriages, there are tall buildings ("as tall as trees") and bridges.

Ward (53f.) identifies this dichotomy of nature versus technology as means of establishing a clear boundary between the natives and the English. Hall (*Representation* 244) emphasises how "'Culture' was opposed to 'Nature'", among whites, whereas it was interchangeable for blacks. The same applies to the film; for the Powhatans, nature is culture and a part of being civilised in the sense of being cultured, whereas for the English imperialists it is associated with primitivity and savagery.

**Gardening**

In another scene, Wiggins cuts hedges into the shapes of a bear, an elephant, a giraffe, and a unicorn. Gardens are very important for the English, and their garden architecture is popular around the world. Many gardens and parks worldwide were inspired by English garden architecture, such as the English garden in Munich, which represents today's ideal English garden that stands for freedom and pure nature. For the English, gardening is a fine art that follows specific rules of aesthetics and design (Gelfert 143-144). This scene in Pocahontas, however, definitely does not present the reality of 1607, they could not have built sculptures from hedges, because there simply had not been any hedges. It must have been included by Disney in order to present a central part of English culture.

**4.3.5 Accents**

To test her hypothesis that Disney films convey specific values by means of language, Lippi-Green analysed 371 characters of full-length, fully animated Disney films in terms of accents and their characterisation. When an actor had to contrive an accent, she made a decision based on how he was most likely perceived. For example, when a voice actor had to speak British English, but fulfilled this task rather poorly, she still counted it as British based on how he was intended to sound by the

makers and how he was perceived by most of the audience (86). Of these 371 characters, 43.1 percent speak a non-stigmatised variety of US American English (MUSE), 13.9 percent speak varieties of US American English associated with specific groups, and 21.8 percent speak standard varieties of British English. Other British English accents are spoken by 11 percent.

A crucial point for the analysis in the study at hand is how these characters were portrayed. 28 of the 129 British English speaking characters are characterised clearly negatively, 53 positively, the rest is either mixed or unclear. Disney portrayed the US American figures mostly in a positive light, with only 33 of 208 characters being villains. Of the 34 foreign-accented characters, however, slightly more than 50 per cent showed negative motivations. Hence, "the overall representation of persons with foreign accents is far more negative than that of speakers of US or British English" (88-91). British varieties show a little more language variation, probably

> [...] because the non-mainstream varieties of British English are not poorly thought of by US English speakers, who do not distinguish, for the most part, between stigmatized varieties of British English (Geordie, Midlands, Cockney, etc.) and those with more social currency.
> (98)

Despite the Disney studio having hired mostly Native American actors to do the voices of the natives[4] (Russell Means as Chief Powhatan, Irene Bedard as Pocahontas), and even consultants and a real shaman in order to depict their culture authentically (Byrne and McQuillan 112), they employed US American actors for the main English characters, John Smith and Governor Ratcliffe. It is certainly not the case that they did not care so much about the English accents; on the contrary, they did think a lot about the cast. Some words used are in British English, such as "biscuit" and not "cookie", though their choice of accents, however, was not necessarily based on authenticity, but also on popularity. At first, Disney considered the British actor Sean Bean to voice John Smith, but then they decided to cast an actor who was well known in the USA. Therefore, they hired Mel Gibson for this role, who was born in the USA and moved to Australia four years later. Interestingly, even though Ratcliffe was voiced by the US American actor David Ogden Stiers, he

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4 Information about voice actors retrieved from: *Pocahontas*, IMDb.com

speaks with an RP accent, even over-pronouncing the intrusive <r>, as he almost rolls it. The question is, why Disney decided to make Ratcliffe speak unmistakable British English, whereas Mel Gibson rather speaks General American English (GA), despite voicing a character of English descent. Realistically seen, every settler should speak a British variety, as the US American accent had not yet developed, since people in America had not been exposed to English before the settlers arrived. Even today's varieties of British English did not exist in the same way in 1607, since language is always changing, but Disney certainly had to choose varieties which are spoken today in order to ensure that their audience understands the texts. However, authenticity was, seemingly, not as important for choosing between British and American English as presenting a specific picture of the English and the US American. In this context, accents become a "shortcut for those roles where stereotype serves as a shortcut to characterization" (Lippi-Green 84). Especially in animations, "language is used as a quick way to build character and reaffirm stereotype" (85).

John Smith, after having met Pocahontas, is the only English person who tries to understand the "New World" and familiarise himself with their habits and culture, and even some words in their language. In the end, he saves Chief Powhatan from being shot by Ratcliffe. Contrastingly, Governor Ratcliffe is the villain who suppresses the natives and preys upon them, has no appreciation for their values, and who can only view them as savages. By allowing Mel Gibson's US American accent, but making Ogden Stiers speak British English, the company represents their own nationality as the 'good' and the English as the 'bad'. However, one should not forget, that the former English are now Americans, hence this hybridity is also shown by John Smith's voice. Maybe Disney's intentions had not been to depict all English as bad, but rather distance themselves and today's Americans from the cruel history of genocide and rather blame it on single persons than on the whole nation of their ancestors.

An objection might be that children would not notice the difference anyway, however, Lippi-Green is certain that children do learn early to "interpret social variation in the language of others" (80). Accents are not used unintentionally, but very deliberately in order to quickly characterise the protagonists by "building on

established preconceived notions associated with specific regional loyalties, ethnic, racial, or economic alliances" (81).

# 5 POCAHONTAS II – JOURNEY TO A NEW WORLD

| Directors | Tom Ellery, Bradley Raymond |
|---|---|
| Producer | Leslie Hough |
| Release Year | 1998 |
| Length | 72 minutes |
| Setting | Virginia, America<br>London, England<br>in the 17th century |

**Table 3 "Pocahontas II / Key Information"**
Data retrieved from <http://www.imdb.com> May 15th,2016.

## 5.1 Plot Summary

After Governor Ratcliffe has been sent back to England, he lies to King James I. and blames Smith for having declared war against the Powhatans. In a confrontation with soldiers who want to arrest Smith, he presumably dies. The King sends John Rolfe who is supposed to prevent this war and bring Chief Powhatan to England for negotiations. Pocahontas hears from Smith's death and slowly needs to come to terms with it. When Rolfe arrives in Jamestown, the chief refuses to come with him and Pocahontas goes to England instead, hoping to bring piece. She is accompanied by a bodyguard called Uttamatomakin. In London, they live at Rolfe's house. The king does not want to meet her and threatens to send soldiers to Jamestown and declare a war, unless, per Ratcliffe's suggestion, she shows how civilised she is. Rolfe and his maid, Mrs. Jenkins, teach her the English etiquette which she is supposed to present at an upcoming ball. There, she meets the King and Queen and almost convinces them that she is very civilised, when Ratcliffe arranges a bear-baiting. Pocahontas cannot cope with the bear being hurt and calls the King a savage, who in turn imprisons her in the Tower of London and declares war to her tribe. Smith reveals himself to still be alive and, together with Rolfe, he helps Pocahontas to break out of prison. Smith tries to convince Pocahontas to hide,

but instead, she proves to the king that Ratcliffe has been lying the entire time. Ratcliffe is arrested, and the King stops the ships with his soldiers. Smith receives his own ship as an apology and Pocahontas and Rolfe declare their love for each other. Whereas Smith goes on journeys around the world, Pocahontas and Rolfe go back to live in Jamestown. Her bodyguard stays in London.

## 5.2 Historical Sources vs The Disney version

The colony is depicted as developing well, in the film they have built many houses, they are happy and healthy, which is highly inaccurate. The people suffered from hunger, their houses were destroyed from fights with the Powhatans, there was war in their land, and they did not know how to grow food or where to find fish. Chief Powhatan therefore decided to trade with the English, as he felt that owning material and weapons which are more powerful could help to eliminate them. He ordered the other tribes not to attack the settlers any longer, but to join the exchange. The Powhatans were cleverer than in the beginning and charged more for their goods. After a while, chief Powhatan asked to meet captain Newport, who represented the Virginia Company in Jamestown. He arranged a feast for Smith, who, unlike in the film, was still there, and Newport. Newport was convinced of a good trade relationship between England and the natives and sailed back to London. Smith decided to be stricter about the prices the Powhatans charged and refused to trade with them, which again led to conflicts between the two nations. Therefore, Pocahontas' role as a mediator became increasingly important and she managed to solve most conflicts (Woodward 52-61). Her role is also emphasised in the film, when she is sent to London in order to negotiate between the two countries. However, in October 1608, Newport, 70 new settlers arrived in Jamestown and Powhatan noticed that Smith had lied to him when he promised they would not stay in America. He forbade his daughter, under penalty of death, to maintain relationships with the settlers (62-68), another fact that is ignored in the film.

In 1609, Smith learned that Ratcliffe, who had left Jamestown earlier, convinced the King that the bad condition of Jamestown and its settlers was Smith's fault. Despite this incident, Ratcliffe did not play such an important role as in the film, and by the time Pocahontas came to England, he had already been dead. Nevertheless his report was a main reason why the council in Jamestown was

disestablished, hence here is one of the very few similarities between history and the film. In the film, Ratcliffe portrays Smith as a traitor and is even allowed to search for him in order to execute him.

Another similarity is that Smith had to leave Jamestown in order to return to London for medical treatment after a bag of gunpowder had exploded. In *Pocahontas I*, Smith is sent back to London for medical treatment after being hit by a gun when he saved the Chief. However, historically, after his departure, Pocahontas was not seen in Jamestown for three years and the colony suffered from the loss of the only two people who were able to negotiate between the two nations. Chief Powhatan's men robbed and murdered any settler they encountered (69-85). These three years are not shown in the movie, they are simply bridged by the plot time that might have passed between the two films. From 1607 to 1610, the number of settlers decreased from 900 to 60. The governor of the Virginia Company, Lord De La Warr, decided to return to America and help. It was only a first step, however, it helped to establish a routine and give them hope (90-93).

Pocahontas was disappointed by his fathers policy and lived with the less hostile tribe Patawomeke. Chief Pasptanze and she secretly tried to help the English whenever possible (100-103). In the sequel, Pocahontas gets on very well with her father, since he had accepted her good relationship to the settlers in the first movie.

In 1613, the settlers captured Pocahontas to threaten her father and to demonstrate their power over the Powhatans. Chief Powhatan agreed to end the war as long as his daughter was treated well and released again. Whereas in the film, there is no war and the settlers have Chief Powhatan's word not to break peace with them, historically, his offer to end the war was only a trick, since he knew very well that Pocahontas was safe amongst the settlers. Therefore, they decided to educate her and teach her everything about the English culture and etiquette. The reverend forced her to pray to their god and steadily converted her to an English lady with Christian belief. Whilst Disney left out most of the historical parts mentioned above, they did emphasise Pocahontas' transformation to a noble English woman. The real Pocahontas herself showed ambitions to learn as much as possible, and in 1614 she had to renounce of paganism and was baptised with the name Rebecca. For the English, this was an important symbol for the consolidation of the two nationalities (106-113).

Pocahontas's new hybrid identity of being English and Algonquian is similarly depicted in the film, however, it is portrayed as if Pocahontas did everything fully voluntarily and not because she was captured. While her captivity, she met John Rolfe, an English Gentleman who had devoted himself to experimenting with planting different types of tobacco on his fields. She showed him everything she had learnt from the Native Americans and helped him grow tobacco which could be sold in England. In April 1614, they got married, which was an important move to end the war with her father, who surprisingly agreed on the marriage and promised to stop fighting the settlers. The English assumed that he had eventually accepted that he could not expel them from America again. In 1615, their son Thomas was born (113-120). In *Pocahontas 2*, they only shortly meet before they go to London, they have no son and they do not get married. They do not even like each other in the beginning of the film and only warm up towards the end. An additional love setting is added, as Pocahontas is made to choose between John Smith and John Rolfe when she meets Smith again in England.

Despite the end of the war, the Virginia Company knew they needed more money in order to strengthen the colony and therefore decided to have the newly wed couple visit London for seven months. John Smith, who had never returned to Jamestown, wrote a letter to Queen Anne reminding her of the services Pocahontas had done for England and asking her to welcome Pocahontas accordingly in London. In June 1615, as soon as they arrived she was scheduled to visit one important person after the other. The English high society was enamoured of Pocahontas and every day somebody else came to visit her. In the film, her welcoming is shown in the song *What a Day in London*, and people are indeed pleased to meet her, as long as she behaves English. She also met John Smith, whom she had thought to be dead, for the last time in Brentford. Because Pocahontas suffered from the bad air in London, Rolfe and she planned to return to America after seven months (121-132). However, Pocahontas died from either tuberculosis or pneumonia before they could leave London. John Rolfe went back alone and left their son in Plymouth, where Dr. Manouri took care of him. Rolfe himself died in 1622 and Thomas Rolfe arrived in Virginia in 1635, where he inherited a large area from his father and also from his grandfather Powhatan who had died in 1618. He never left Virginia, but followed his father's steps and grew tobacco to be sold to England (135-137).

Nevertheless, although realised differently, some similarities between the film and history are there:

- Pocahontas had Smith thought to be dead.
- She went to London.
- She was taught English manners, etiquette, language and culture.
- John Rolfe fell in love with her.
- She mediated between the Native Americans and the English.

Disney clearly intended to depict Pocahontas' important role as mediator between England and America, and emphasise her transformation, however, the way they told her story was even more historically inaccurate than in *Pocahontas I*. To summarise the most important points, she was married to Rolfe and had a son before they went to London, in London, she was never captured, the reason to travel to London was not to end a war, but to inform the English about a promising new world, and Pocahontas died at the point Disney's story ends: Before she could travel back home. What is striking, however, is one fact that Disney did realise in the film. Why did they decide to let Pocahontas choose Rolfe instead of Smith? This is not the typical Disney's happy ending, since Smith was her great love in the first film. However, as they already had chosen to end her relationship with Smith, they could have as well told the story according to real events and show more of Pocahontas life in America. All these choices Disney had to make, are part of the process of regulation and production and might have followed a specific purpose the viewer does not know. It is likely that Disney left out most historical events and cruelties for its sequel to make it more attractive to the audience and especially to the children. After all, a film company's goal is not only to entertain, but also to make money, and hence they need to target their content to their audience.

## 5.3 Englishness and Stereotypical Behaviour

### 5.3.1 English Superiority: Imperialism

Representing the Empire, the British flag again occurs several times. Mostly, it can be seen on the ship sailing to and from America. In the beginning we can see the

Union Jack on the ship until the picture zooms in completely and the flag fills up the whole screen, followed by a flying eagle, possibly representing the Northern Americans. Interestingly, it is torn to pieces in the sequel as well as in the first film. In the first part, in the beginning, it is destroyed by the storm, as if foreshadowing the difficulties the settlers will experience later. In the second part, it is cut through by Ratcliffe at the end of the film, shortly before he himself is arrested. This can be interpreted as a symbol for Disney's criticism on the cruelties of colonial imperialism and another way to distance themselves from their violent past. Towards the end, even John Rolfe questions his own loyalty to the King and helps Pocahontas to fight against his decision to send an armada to America. When they stop Ratcliffe from sailing away, the villain hides behind the British flag, hence he hides behind the empire or the decision of the empire. However, as he notices that he has lost and that the king has found out about his lies, he acts against the empire's decision, cuts the flag into pieces, and attacks Pocahontas. The weather in this scene is very symbolic too. Whereas the sun shines in most of the film, it storms and rains during the final fight. The storm can be comparable to change. The king's opinion of what it means to be civilised was challenged, he finds out that he has trusted the wrong person, and, after the storm has stopped, everyone sees things more clear again.

The table below shows that overall, the relationship between the two ethnicities has improved, as less negatively connoted names are used for both sides, the only real exception is Ratcliffe. There are still a few instances, however, they are not as extreme as in the first movie. Nevertheless, it is important to regard them in a thorough analysis. Naming, as part of classification, is a way to ascribe identity to individuals and groups. Taylor notices that

> our identity is partly shaped [...] by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves.
> (25)

This is exactly, what happens in Pocahontas 1 and 2. Even if the term 'savage' is used less to describe the Native Americans, it is still present in the way the English treat them. Until Pocahontas decides to be herself, and until the English accept this

decision, they still treat her like somebody to be civilised and 'mirror back' this perception to her through trying to transform her to a 'better' self.

|  | For the English | For the Native Americans |
|---|---|---|
| **By the English** | Ratcliffe:<br>best soldiers in the civilised world | Ratcliffe:<br>heathens<br>barbarian<br>distinguished guests from the forest of the new world<br>the savage leader<br>savage<br><br>King James:<br>savage behaviour<br><br>John Rolfe:<br>your people<br>Your Grand Chiefliness (to Powhatan)<br><br>John Smith:<br>your people<br><br>Settler:<br>filthy barbarian<br>bloody savage |
| **By the Native Americans** | By the Native Americans<br>Chief Powhatan:<br>pale chief (about the King)<br>pale ones<br>pale face<br><br>Pocahontas:<br>your behaviour is savage<br>you and your people are the barbarians (to James)<br><br>Warrior:<br>pale one<br>barbarians | Pocahontas:<br>my people |

**Table 4 "Names used for the English and Native Americans"**

While they are still in America, the atmosphere is tense when the new settlers arrive. A man names Pocahontas a 'filthy barbarian' and 'bloody savage', even though she

has saved him from getting run over by a horse. One of Powhatan's warriors is furious when he figures out that the English probably only want their land and calls them barbarians too. Except for these two incidents, the two nationalities behave relatively polite towards each other. Chief Powhatan has stopped calling them beasts or savages and refers to them as the pale ones. John Rolfe, knowing from his own country that there are polite ways to address a king, calls him "Your Grand Chiefliness".

Whereas Ratcliffe behaves in his old manners and still talks about the Native Americans as barbarians, heathens, and savages, most people in London do not show any strong negative reactions to Pocahontas and Uttamatomakkin. In *What a Day in London*, London's citizens are excited about her arrival, one woman envies her hair, men compliment on her beautiful appearance, and the crowd is delighted because their day in London has turned out to be wonderful, since normally "one day's like the day before". At the ball, she is the "guest of honour" and the Queen as well as the King seem to like her in the beginning. She is perceived as the "exotic Other" and romanticised, like Edward Said describes it in *Orientalism*.

However, the situation escalates after Ratcliffe has arranged a bear baiting, when King James asks Pocahontas to stop showing such savage behaviour, as she tries to help the bear. Pocahontas furiously replies that his people are barbarians with savage behaviour and thereby upsets the King.

In both worlds, the fictional and the real one, this relationship only worked out because–and as long–Pocahontas behaved "civilised", at least according to the English opinion of what being civilised means. Pocahontas was educated, introduced to English customs and in the film and in reality, additionally, she also had to change her looks in order to fit in. In *Wait Till He Sees You*, Mrs. Jenkins makes sure everyone will be happy with her:

> You've got me dear to see
> You're lady tonight
> What seems strange, is just new
> People change everyday till they
> Find their own way, so can you
>
> And wait till he sees you
> After you're dressed.
> I think the king

Will be very impressed.
Wait till he sees you walking with ease
He'll be so pleased
You came down from the trees.

[…]

Fate has a way of arranging what's right.
After he sees you in your new clothes,
A lady of grace from your head to your toes.

It seems as if nobody regards Pocahontas to be a "lady of grace" the way she is, she has to be changed in order to please the English, especially King James. Producing an English version of Pocahontas is "a way of arranging what's right". "He'll be so pleased you came down from the trees" emphasises how important it is for Pocahontas to give up on old behaviour and her nature-loving character. Mrs. Jenkins believes she has to change to find her own way, which is rather paradox, since this is not really Pocahontas herself, but only what the English made of her. This is also, what Pocahontas realises when she eventually listens to the spirit within, as advised by Grandmother Willow. She refuses to pretend being someone else: "How can they respect my culture if they haven't seen it?" (57:43).

The English's imperialist attempt to civilise anyone different from them, something that has already been addressed in the first film especially by linguistic representation, is further represented through images in this film, in particular during the song *Wait Till He Sees You*. Pocahontas has to learn how to dress like an English lady, such as the ladies at court wearing corsets and gowns with the Spanish farthingale in *Pocahontas I*. She believes she is already fully dressed when she only wears her underwear, and, not having come across English fashion before, proudly presents herself to an embarrassed John Rolfe. Having walked barefooted throughout her life, she now has to wear shoes to impress the King. Mrs. Jenkins also covers her face with white power, to conceal her dark skin. John Rolfe teachers her how to move and dance in her new clothes. In America, Pocahontas has danced before, but she never had to learn a choreography. Eventually, John hands a new necklace to her. Pocahontas hesitates for a moment and her pets are in shock when she then takes off her mother's necklace and takes the English one instead–a strong symbol for her transformation from a Native American woman to an English lady that has been "civilised" in terms of Western society. This is also what Said means by the

hegemonic processes of Orientalism: "To restore a region from its present barbarism to its former classical greatness; to instruct (for its own benefit) the Orient in the ways of the modern West" (86), hence, the attempt of the English to educate the Native Americans in terms of Western belief systems. However, this transformation is reversed in the end, when Pocahontas decides to appear at court like she really is, with her Native American clothes and her necklace, which John Rolfe has returned, realising how important it is for Pocahontas to be herself.



**Figure 3 "Screenshot of Pocahontas trying to get dressed, Mrs. Jenkins on the right"**

Another symbol for England's imperialist strength and dominance over the Native Americans is Uttamatomakkin's wooden stick. Before they leave America, Chief Powhatan asks him to cut a notch in it for every white person he sees, as he needs to know how strong they are. Only after a few minutes in London, his stick is gone, representing England as a very strong nation. Furthermore, Uttamatomakkin, who has denied the English culture throughout the story but secretly enjoyed the food, tea and attention he received, eventually decides to stay in England with Mrs. Jenkins and is fully dressed in English gentlemen's clothes. Mrs. Jenkins even managed to tame and civilise the bear ("And you, mind your manners!", 1:07:30), an ironic

depiction by Disney to show that the English seemingly can change anything according to their wishes.



**Figure 4 "Screenshot of Uttamatomakkin, Mrs. Jenkins and the bear"**

However, there is an exchange, as Rolfe returns to America with Pocahontas. Nevertheless, he keeps his English clothes and behaviour, the process of transformation did not work in both directions. Again, just as in the first film, the Native Americans have been integrated into the dominant English culture by hegemonic processes.

The lyrics of *Between Two Worlds*, which is sung while the final credits, illustrate the mediating role of the real as well as the fictional Pocahontas and the importance of her relationship to John Rolfe for English imperialism. "We have built a bridge of love between two worlds" resembles what their relationship was meant to be in history. Their marriage was important to end the war between the Powhatans and settlers and to attract new people from England.

### 5.3.2 The Ideal of the English Gentleman

Politeness, etiquette and manners build an important part of Disney's depiction of English identity. The British Council asked more than 5,029 adults from Germany,

Brazil, China, India, and the US to give their opinion on what it means to be British and 46 per cent mentioned politeness, respect and good manners (*Best and worst of British in the eyes of the world*, British Council). It is not known, if the foreigners perceive Britishness as dominated by the English, or if they perceive all four nation under the British flag as polite, but clearly, this stereotype does exist in the mind of outsiders. However, is this really the case? Are the people of Britain more polite than in other countries? Maybe this is only what foreigners feel, since the English language as spoken in Britain consists of many conventions to be followed when speaking to strangers, especially for greeting someone, small talk and making requests.

These conventions are what worry John Rolfe when Pocahontas is invited to the ball, as John Rolfe is aware of how complex the conventions are (32:00) and reminds Pocahontas: "But it's the elite of British society, etiquette, manners, there's a million ways you can insult someone" (35:28). For him, manners are very important. When he arrives in Jamestown, he tries to help Pocahontas calm down the settlers and Native Americans, but is upset because she did not thank him for his help: "What have happened to manners and etiquette?". Pocahontas, however, is not very impressed by his seeming politeness: "Since you are new here, I don't expect you to have them yet" (11:50). John Rolfe also brings a gift of peace "according to the customs of Greater Britain" (13:17). He bows as a greeting, before dances, to say goodbye, and to say thank you. Even when he is angry, he tries to stick to his manners. As soon as they have arrived in London, Pocahontas runs away and climbs a tree to see the city from above. John Rolfe is upset, but adheres to social conventions: "Would you care to join me here, on the ground, this instant?" (27:24). He does not speak in a polite tone, but the words in the sentence are, which illustrates what was stated above: English people might sound polite by the words they use, but they do not necessarily have to mean it.

One part of English manners is to know how to address other people. When Pocahontas is about to meet King James and Queen Anne, she tries to remind herself of all the different words she has learnt to address them: "Hello your Excellence, your Great... Good Highness, you magnificent…", and eventually addresses them with "Your Excellency" and "Your Grace" (42:07). The King also

knows how essential politeness is, as he explains to Pocahontas that he could not talk to her for now as he should not be rude and ignore his other guests (43:05).

Of further importance is honour, which is "the backbone of our civilisation", as Rolfe explains to Pocahontas (23:40). Even the King's butler tries to remain honourable when Uttamatomakkin steals his jacket and he is left topless. He keeps his head up and his straight posture, and even ensures that his collar is in the right place (42:03). Part of honour is keeping one's word, and Mrs. Jenkins knows that when Rolfe gives someone his word, they can stake their life on it. He gave Pocahontas his "word as a gentleman" (32:40) to arrange for her to meet King James. Also titles seem to be important, Pocahontas is impressed when John Rolfe becomes "Lord Advisor to the Royal Court", as she knows what a wonderful honour this is.

### 5.3.3 English Class Society and Loyalty to the Royalty
In *What a Day in London*, the viewer experiences London's everyday life. The upper class is not yet awake, a butler only just prepares breakfast for them and a maid sweeps their corridors, whereas the working class is already busy. Workers on the street stock their shops, others have to slop pigs and gut fish to trade them on the market. Children are on their way to school.

The class society is especially represented through the King and Queen and the life at court, which is a central point of the story. The English loyalty to the Crown is emphasised. Pocahontas notices herself that he "must be a great king to have so many subjects […] and the loyalty of so many good men" (42:45). Whenever the King is accused of having lied, Rolfe makes sure to emphasise that a king does not lie. He usually speaks of a misunderstanding and does not want to believe his king to be wrong. He speaks of him in glowingly, telling Chief Powhatan that he believes they "can prosper together in this great land" under King James's rule (14:12). Disney's idea of the English, as part of the British empire, to be loyal to Royalty might not be too far fetched. The first verse of their national anthem, which used to be "God Save The King" in 1745, but was substituted by "God Save The Queen" is:

God save our gracious Queen,
long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen!
Send her victorious,
happy and glorious,
long to reign over us.
God save the Queen!

In an online article for BBC, Mark Easton (bbc.com) why the nations of the United Kingdom love the monarchy. He explains that people fear institutional change to threaten their feeling of identity, which seems plausible, as change is always a danger to established ways of thinking. Supporters of the monarchy especially embrace the combination of "stability and adaptability" (Oakland 79). The monarch resembles stability, whereas the government, the Parliament, can be elected by the monarch's subjects (78). The Parliament is not present in the film, although it had already existed long before James I. Already in 1625, Simon de Montfort encouraged the formation of a Parliament (72).

Nevertheless, the Disney company presents to its viewers the popular narratives of a country, mostly from the time a film is published, not from the actual time setting, since these believes are widely recognised and hence more attractive to the audience. Although a poll from 1997 showed that support for the monarchy had decreased to less than 50 per cent (83), the national anthem and the fact that England has remained a monarchy for centuries might have strengthened the common belief that the English love their Royals and have always been loyal to them. After all, it has existed since 1066, with only a short interruption of eleven years (Gelfert 92). Indeed, the monarchy is strongly associated with English identity, due to its stability. The monarchy "serves as a personification of the state" and "was also said in the past to reflect family values and has a certain glamour about it, which is attractive to many people" (Oakland 82).

Additionally, John Rolfe's house certainly represents upper class as well. Not only he has his own housekeeper, but the whole building looks prosperous, and the interior expensive, with vases, lots of paintings and portraits in golden frames, large carpets, and many rooms.

In London's city, the classes seem to mingle. In *What a Day in London* all the citizens come together to see Pocahontas, and class distinctions are shown by the clothes they wear. The working class wears cloth and rather brown and grey colours,

whereas the others have beautiful colourful dresses. Nevertheless, they all seem to content with their lives and class distinctions are not really depicted as a problem.

### 5.3.4 English Stereotypical Behaviour and Lifestyle

**Humour**

Like in the first film, there are some instances of sarcasm, especially voiced by John Smith. In a fight with soldiers he throws one out of the window and asks the others: "Thanks for dropping in, anyone else care to join him?" (1:20). His sense of humour is not only sarcastic, he also likes to play with words, such as 'dropping' in this example. In another fight, to stop Ratcliffe's armada, he swings his sword and asks: "Mind if I cut in?", and when Ratcliffe points a knife at him: "Trying to make a point?" (1:02:20). Just like in the first film, he is the brave and funny guy who always has a joke on his lips, no matter what happens.

Although Oakland (66) warns his readers that there is no typical English person, he agrees that some stereotypes are indeed employed by many in the nation, one of which is dry humour with an affection for using language in flexible ways, just like Smith does. John Rolfe also knows how to talk big when he joins the fight on the ship and complains: "Who started the party without me?" - Smith: "You call this a party?"–Rolfe: "You're not having any fun?" (1:00:10). He also sarcastically tells Uttamatomakkin not to talk so much at the ball, then he would be fine (40:03). Uttamatomakkin never talks. Rolfe and Smith both seem to use humour to calm down and distract themselves from fear in difficult or dangerous situations.

**Drinking Tea**

Disney amuses the viewer with another method the English use to deal with problematic situations. Mrs. Jenkins, John Rolfe's housekeeper is displayed as a rather comical character. Not only she keeps breaking things and losing her glasses, she seems to have the one and only solution to any problem: Tea. After Rolfe has Uttamatomakkin to her, she is not scared of his size and grim expression, she simply knows: "Ooh, I'll put on lots and lots of tea" (32:15). When Pocahontas and John Rolfe leave the house for the ball, they close the door into the faces of Pocahontas's companions, Meeko, Percy and Flint, who all hit their heads by running into the door. They look upset and Mrs. Jenkins puts on more tea for them. In another scene, the

three animals, Mrs. Jenkins, and John Rolfe are devastated after Pocahontas's and Uttamatomakkin arrest. This time, the housekeeper does not sound very convinced when she sadly decides to put on some tea. Tea in English culture is often used as something with "miraculous properties" and is often "an essential remedy for all social and psychological ills, from a bruised ego to the trauma of a divorce or bereavement" (Fox 312). Therefore, one of its functions is to calm everyone down in problematic situations. Whenever one feels uncomfortable or has doubts about something, they put on some tea, as well as when new visitors arrive, often to avoid awkward conversations (ibid.). All these situations are shown in the film and in all of them, Mrs. Jenkins puts the kettle on.

The English are well known for their tea culture. In the film, Pocahontas and Smith arrived in England around 1610-1614 (*Pocahontas II: Journey to a New World*, Disney.wikia.com), which indeed was the time where tea was first traded to England, but it was very expensive. It was not fashionable to drink tea until the late 18th century (Fromer 5). It is therefore rather unlikely, that Mrs. Jenkins would have loved tea so much in 1610, not even in 1616, when the real Pocahontas arrived in London. One can of course argue that rich households might have enjoyed tea earlier, but this is not the case in Disney's film either. In the song What a Day in London a couple, dressed in working class clothing, sings: "There's tea to brew and buns to bake".

Nevertheless, when the film was produced, England had already been well known for its obsession with tea and their tea culture is probably one of the narratives of this country that quickly comes to one's mind. Since the whole film illustrates and supports the popular belief of what it means to be English, tea necessarily had to be a part of it. Such stereotypes like this, as part of a widely shared knowledge, enable a quick processing of the messages sent in the film, which is important for any medium with the purpose of attracting audience.

**Pubs and Drinks**

Pub culture is represented through two soldiers who are happy that there is no war, because they can spend their time getting drunk in front of a pub. Also Smith is sat in a pub when he hears from some beer men who are drinking beer that Pocahontas has been arrested. The pub has always been a social institution and much more

money is spent in pubs than on many other leisure activities (Oakland 329). In *Pocahontas II* the English seem to enjoy drinking, especially beer, until they get drunk. In *What a Day in London*, the soldiers are drunk even though it is early in the morning, another one staggers home, along with the lyrics "the midnight men drift home to bed", and when Rolfe and Pocahontas are at the ball, one of Rolfe's friends is so drunk he almost does not manage to walk and speak properly. Also the English Percy, Ratcliffe's dog, who has stayed with Pocahontas since the end of the first film, spends his journey to London in a rum barrel, looking happily drunk.

This corresponds to a common stereotype about the English today, according to which they drink heavily and more than any other country. Alcoholism is indeed a problem in today's society, after smoking and obesity, alcohol is one of the three biggest factors for death, and alcoholic liver disease is increasing in England, whereas it is on the decrease anywhere else in Europe, which statistics from 2011 show (*Statistics on Alcohol*, Alcohol Concern). Drinking has generally increased between 1992 and 2006 (Foxcroft and Smith 2009, JRF) in Great Britain, which might be a reason why Disney took up and satirised this stereotype in their film.

This stereotype, being a stereotype because it exaggerates today's reality, is nevertheless historically accurate to some extent. By the time, Pocahontas arrived in London, pub culture had already been successfully established since two centuries, only that pubs formerly had been 'beer houses' and taverns. London was popular for their drinking excesses, up to a point where more than 200 beer houses had to be closed in 1574 because consumption of alcohol had become too dangerous. According to historical accounts it seems, London's population was only happy when they had something to drink (Ackroyd 355-357).

On *What Culture*, Sam Hill, who has analysed films professionally to see which believes US American film companies employ in their productions, agrees on the existence of the stereotype that the English drink a lot and love pubs (Hill, WhatCulture.com).


**Art and Literature**

In *What a Day in London*, the English are presented as artistically minded. They are popular for their literature and Disney could not neglect this aspect of English culture and therefore included a little joke in this scene. Shakespeare can be seen as he

conceives the idea for Hamlet (28:07). An undertaker walks past him and sings "We'll rue this day, you wait and see", Shakespeare takes the skull, holds it up, and continues: "what is to be or not to be", then takes his parchment to note down his idea. Shakespeare wrote his play in 1601, long before Pocahontas arrived in London. Nevertheless, he works as an effective icon to signify English art culture, as the "[g]reat writers of the past were revived and reappraised, and portrayed as masters of the native language, representatives of the national spirits and embodiments of the English" (Richards 9). Especially Shakespeare was considered as *the* English poet and playwright (10).

Literature was indeed identified as something important to the definition of Englishness, as can be seen in the introductory sections. Kate Fox refers to this characteristic as the English's 'love of words', since they are "very much a verbal rather than a visual culture, considerably more noted for our literature than for our art" (82).

Additionally to literature, there are a Punch-and-Judy theatre, and a man painting a picture. Furthermore, Pocahontas admires London for its music.


**London's Architecture and Brisk City-Life**

The town itself is supposed to depict London in the beginning of the 17th century. The buildings shown are themselves strong icons of Englishness, since London, as the English capital has always been popular and the centre of the realm. Especially the London Bridge and London Tower have been known widely, and visitors were astounded by the "magnificently built-up London Bridge" and "rich waterfront places" (Honan 95).

One of the first buildings to be seen in the film is the Tower of London from far away when John Smith is trying to escape the soldiers. It is also the first building, Pocahontas sees from the ship. Below, the image shows the tower in the 17th century, the screenshot underneath is Disney's version of it. Though less detailed, yet accurately shaped and placed in the right location, it is the most authentically depicted building in this film. Next to the palace, it is also a key building of the story, since Pocahontas and Uttamatomakkin are both captured there after the ball. It might have also been depicted immediately in the beginning of the film and Pocahontas's arrival to foreshadow their arrest.

**Figure 4 "Engraving of the Tower of London, 17th century"**



**Figure 5 "London Bridge in 1616 and screenshot of London Bridge in *Pocahontas II*"**

London Bridge can be seen from above and another time when Pocahontas is on her way through London. Below, the first picture shows the bridge in 1616. The screenshot underneath shows Disney's version, they made the houses look more playful and colourful, an attractive place to live in, whereas in the original, the houses are neatly organised and all of the same height.

The King's apparent main residence is fictional, the palace must be either in, or close to London, but does not look like a palace that existed in reality. James and Anne seem to have thrones in every room. First, the thrones are placed centrally in an empty, but ostentatiously decorated hall, the second time they are set immediately next to a wall, in front of a big chess field, and the third time they can be seen in the centre again, with tribunes to their left and right where they listen to the citizen's, in this case Pocahontas', requests. This dominance of the King and Queen on their thrones depicts their power, but also to some extent their passiveness. They seem to move, but only from one throne to the other, and state affairs are regulated from there, even while playing chess, by ordering others to attend to their affairs.

Chief Powhatan wonders about this passiveness as well, when he asks John Rolfe why he is asked to visit James: "I do not want the pale chief's land. He wants mine. Why doesn't he cross the salt water to see me?". John Rolfe knows, the King would never do this: "I'm afraid that simply isn't done" (14:12). Even more surprising that in the end, James himself appears in the harbour to arrest Ratcliffe.

In *What a Day in London*, Pocahontas describes the city as colourful and exciting, with many paths and signs, shiny roofs, tall houses, and crowded with many different people.

> In London, people seem to come in every shape and size.
> So many paths, I wonder how they find their way,
> So many signs, I wonder what they really say.
> […]
>
> Music and feathered hats,
> And roofs that shine
> With flags flying higher than a pine.
> […]
>
> How do they build their huts so tall,
> Can this be all one tribe?
> […]

London's as busy as a hive of bees,
Grandmother Willow would just love these trees.
Crowded and loud but so exciting too,
With colours I never even knew.

This description, the clothes worn by the upper-class people, and the occurrence of Shakespeare, all remind of Elizabethan London–Shakespeare's London–in the 16th century. Shakespeare arrived in the late 1580s when London was one of the most important cities of the kingdom. It was the centre of trade and appealed to many visitors, who were impressed by "its ever-increasing size, its fine houses, its slums, its bountiful opportunities" and its many ways of entertainment (Dickson 480). Pocahontas is similarly impressed and astounded by London's busy life. Elizabethan London was indeed busy and very loud, with bells ringing on every corner, the sound of hooves on cobbles and people screaming in the streets. Trade was present everywhere, with merchants shouting and trying to sell their goods. The city was overcrowded, the streets were filled and visitors could feel the energy of the mercantile atmosphere (Ackroyd 87-89, Honan 98-99). Pocahontas compares London to a hive of bees, a very accurate comparison if one believes the words of Bruce R. Smith when he described London in the 17th century:

> [T]he noyse in it is like that of Bees, a strange humming or buzze, mixt of walking, tongues, and feet: It is a kind of still roare or loud whisper..
> (Smith qtd. in Ackroyd 73).

London was therefore popular at all times for its briskness with teeming crowds and hectic Londoners. In *What a Day in London*, the streets are also depicted as crowded and vivid, merchants mingle with upper-class members, and everyone came to marvel at the newly arrived Native American princess.

Furthermore, Disney did their research when they depicted forms of entertainment. Bear-baiting, amongst other cruel traditions such as dog- and bull-baiting or cockfights, was indeed enjoyed by many Londoners in the 17th century (183) and there was always some curiosity to cause surprise and amazement (187).

However, London was not only a beautiful, colourful and buoyant place to enjoy. The city was unsanitary, corpses of animals rotted in the streets and the city smelled from urine and faeces. Heads of traitors were stuck on poles at London Bridge as a warning and the city was too overcrowded. This stood in stark contrast to

the beautiful city wards, decorated façades, and impressive gardens with their wild flowers, the evident wealth along the Thames and the many shops and painted theatres (Honan 95-98). Here, the process of Disneyfication can be detected again. Disney combined both, a fascinating Shakespearean London with a modern looking version of colourful and playful buildings, but ignored the negative aspects, the dirt in the streets, the poor and the unhappy. In *What a Day in London* no beggars are shown in the streets and all the Londoners look happy, no matter which class they belong to.

English architecture is not only represented in London, but also in America, where we can see how Jamestown has developed since the Smith's departure in *Pocahontas I*. The screenshots below accurately show how small it was at this time, however, the houses are in better condition as they were in reality, and the inhabitants look healthy and well-fed, whereas in truth, there was hunger and war, and buildings were constantly destroyed. Maybe the producers of the film had not known about it, but the snow in this scene reminds of horrible events in the colony during a harsh winter in 1609. Only 60 of 490 settlers survived the winter, and towards the end, people were so desperate that one man, so it was reported by a settler to the Virginia Company, killed his wife to eat the remains (Woodward 85).



**Figure 6 "Screenshot of Jamestown"**

**Figure 7 "Screenshot of a house in Jamestown, good condition"**

### 5.3.2 Accents

Mel Gibson, the previous voice of John Smith was substituted by his younger brother, Donal Gibson, who speaks in a similar accent. However, his character is only second to John Rolfe, who is the story's hero this time. John Rolfe is voiced by Billy Zane, also a US American actor (*Pocahontas II*, IMDb.com). Compared to his normal everyday accent, the actor does make an effort to sound more English in the film. He pronounces "either" as /ˈaɪðə/ instead of /iːðər/, "dance" as /dɑːns/, not /dæns/, and tries not to pronounce /r/s in words like /rəˈtəːn/ (return), due to the non-rhoticity of RP. Additionally, he uses British English phrases, such as 'I beg you pardon' (rightfully leaving out the /r/) or 'How d'you do?'. Nevertheless, his American English can be heard occasionally when he pronounces a /t/ as alveolar flap [ɾ] between vowels, as in "matter of diplomacy" or very often uses the GA /æ/, which is more closed than in RP, where it rather sounds like /ɑ/, such as in /θæŋk/ (thank).

In general, it does not seem as if Disney has used specific accents to represent the characteristic of different nationalities in this film, but simply intended

to show how much variety there is in London. Since most of the film is set in London, the viewer can hear many different people speaking. The high society sticks to accents similar to RP, whereas London's working class language cannot be pinned down to one accent. Many sound English, though, if listening closely, one can hear through the voice actors' US pronunciation in some words. However, this does not inhibit authenticity this time, since England has always been multicultural, which is, indeed, well depicted in *What a Day in London*. Immigration is an inherent part of English history, and it had started much earlier, even already in the seventh century, when London was a central harbour for trade, its inhabitants had come from all different parts of the world (Ackroyd 691). A huge immigration wave started in the 1560ies (693) and by the time Pocahontas arrived in England, London had already seen, amongst others, Danish, Dutch, German, Chinese, French, Spanish, Italian, and Icelandic immigrants (see Winder, Honan 99, Tönnies and Viol 98). It would hence be inappropriate to believe the English spoken in the city to consist of only one or two particular accents, since it has been influenced by many different languages ever since. A great variety of accents can be detected in Disney's London, which represents reality more accurately than the choice of GA- and RP-related accents did in *Pocahontas I*. The people singing are aware of this too, mentioning how the people in London "come from far and near".

# 6 THE CIRCUIT OF CULTURE

In the following section, the findings will be analysed with Du Gays and Hall's 'Circuit of Culture' (3) in order to for them to be summarised and put into the context of a whole meaning-producing process.
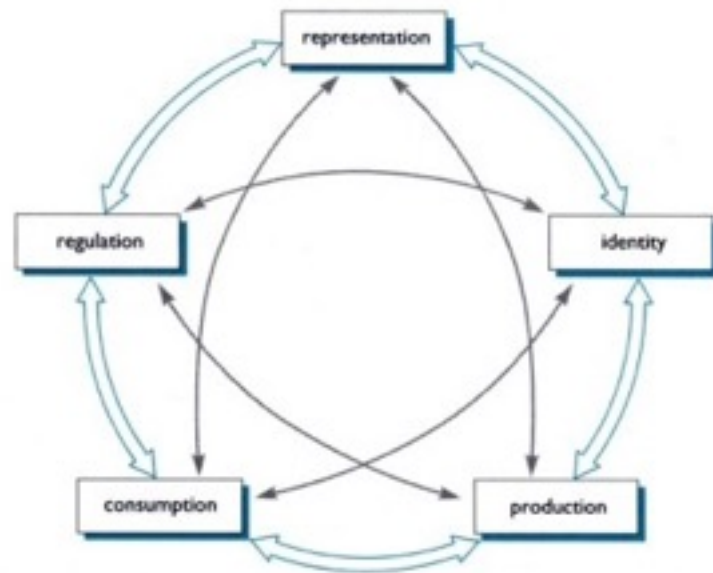


**Figure 8 "Circuit of Culture"**

The circuit of culture consists in five processes which are involved in producing meaning, and therefore crucial for any cultural analysis, whether it is about advertisements, films, books, or other media. It puts the item to be analysed in context and takes a view from different perspectives. Furthermore, it does not only address the visual elements such as representation and identity, but also the elements of consumption, production, and regulation. A cultural product is viewed from all angles: "how it is represented, what social identities are associated with it, how it is produced and consumed, and what mechanisms regulate its distribution and use" (Du Gay et al. 3). Since it is a circuit, these elements influence each other, and the borders are not always clear cut. Each element is part of another and, thus, each of them intertwines and overlaps (4).

## 6.1 The Visible Levels: Representation and Identity

Representation describes "the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, or any signifying system) to produce meaning" (Hall, *Representation* 61), and describes, depicts, and/or symbolises something in a specific way in order to create a certain image in the audience's minds. Represented are concepts, ideas, values, feelings, products of history, and beliefs in a society. These representations construct our knowledge about ourselves and others (Long and Wall 77-93, Hall, *Representation* 61). If we do not deal with them critically, we might accept stereotypical views about cultures "we have never been involved with and construct our understanding of them from media representations" (80). Representations as part of a meaning-making process, however, are not fixed; they are "mediated products of social and historical circumstances" (Spencer 2). Nothing in the world possesses only one meaning–the meaning depends on "signification (the use of signs in language)" and the way people of a culture "carve up, classify and assign meaning to the world" (Hall, *Representation* 61). Representation evokes certain attitudes and emotions in the audience (226). The production of meaning is therefore conducted by interpretation. Representation interrelates with identity, through systems of representation, specific images about nationalities, gender and class, while other groups are conveyed and produce meanings about their identities. Very often, such social groups are represented in a highly stereotypical way (O'Sullivan and Jewkes 73).

In *Pocahontas I* and *II*, we find representations of two ethnicities, the Native Americans and the English, and, more superficiallz, a third group: The US American Disney company and its values themselves implied into the representation of the others, such as depicting the native families with their own patriarchal ideals (see Edwards 155, as discussed in section).

Representation happens, especially, by means of spoken language, such as accents and songs to contrast the two nationalities. Furthermore, images function as additional forms of representations. The animals in the film signify the different cultures, and typical icons of Englishness, such as the gardening scene, the gift baskets and Percy's posh bath in *Pocahontas I*, and of the people and London in

*Pocahontas II* occur. These images emphasise and strengthen the way the nationalities are perceived.

A first introduction to the identities of the two major ethnicities is already established by the way Disney designed the opening scenes for Pocahontas. The film starts with an old painting of London in the early 17th century, where the audience can see the river Thames and London Bridge. In the background, the settlers get ready to sail away with the Virginia Company and proudly sing about their promising future. Soon, the Tower of London and waving British flags become visible as well.

The first scene in which the Native Americans are shown also establishes their identity as it is depicted further in the storyline. America's landscape, with beautiful rivers, high trees, rocks, animals, and natives working in the fields and going fishing are depicted and, thereby, their deep bond with nature is signified, emphasised by the song *Steady as the Beating Drum*.

Whereas Di Giovanni asserts that in the opening scenes, the "contrast with the narrating culture is, at this stage, not particularly emphasized and the Other may still seem to play a major role in" Disney's animations (97), it is different with Pocahontas. Most importantly, the Other does play a central role in this film, and both cultures are constantly shown. Additionally, the strong difference between the Americans' affinity with nature and the English's longing for gold and honour is present from the very beginning.

Parekh (167) suggests that this specific representation of the Native Americans is a very common theme in Hollywood. He refers to them as 'noble savages' who are in harmony with nature. Pocahontas, in particular, personifies this image; she follows the spirits, listens to an old tree and strives for harmony with nature as well as with the colonists, establishing peace between the two nations. In *Pocahontas II*, the natives are less present. They are represented alongside the English, through Pocahontas' transformation into an English woman, and by her companion who eventually also adopts English culture and stays with Rolfe's housekeeper.

Through these representations, specific national identities are created. This did not happen unintentionally, but was clearly on Walt Disney's agenda. In his films, identity was created by a "nostalgia for a carefully falsified past" (Schickel 84f.). The

stories are intended to depict a certain theme and the characters are intentionally designed to show "human weaknesses which [Disney's animators] exaggerate in a humorous way" (174). It is not supposed to be a "caricature of individuals" though, but a "caricature of life". (ibid.). Therefore, the Disney company clearly had very specific representations of identity in mind when they created their stories.

The English are represented by Ratcliffe as the aggressive and reckless imperialists who feel superior. However, they are also shown as likeable personalities by the other imperialists who eventually are enlightened by Pocahontas and John Smith and display an acceptance of Native American culture. In this setting of imperialism, the English are viewed as the ancestors of today's US American society and it would hence not be feasible to depict them in a fully negative light. It rather seems that Disney employed stereotypes for the sake of humour, as if to mock a loved brother. In *English Humour*, Priestley described this behaviour as 'tender mockery': "We laugh at those we love...because we have come to know them so well, that certain traits or habits, as familiar to us as their faces, seem peculiarly absurd" (16).

The negative identity exhibited by Ratcliffe is furthermore challenged by the characters of John Smith, who is open to learn about the new culture he encounters, and Pocahontas, who is curious and tries to mediate between both nations. This is criticised, though, by Giroux, who claims that Disney downplays negative past events that happened by means of "historical forgetting" (127), such as the genocide when the English settlers arrived in America. In Disney, "the past becomes a vehicle for rationalizing the authoritarian, [and] normalizing tendencies of the dominant culture" (ibid.). The cruel history is whitewashed, the happy ending encourages the viewers to believe that piece was established.

In *Pocahontas II*, the English are shown as a civilised nation who are extremely loyal to the Crown and very polite. They are depicted as if there were no prototypical English person, but a variety of people, as they come "in every shape and size" and with many different accents. Nevertheless, Disney applies stereotypical images, such as the ideal of the English gentleman. Of high importance are manners and etiquette, indicated by Pocahontas' process of learning the rules of high society and by John Rolfe's generally polite behaviour and articulation. John Rolfe takes over John Smith's role and challenges the English identity of non-

acceptance depicted by Ratcliffe and the King, when Rolfe questions his own loyalty to the crown and his opinion about the natives. Eventually, he even encourages Pocahontas to be herself and accepts her culture. Again, Ratcliffe remains the only one not to change his mind, whilst all the other English, even the King and Queen, are portrayed as accepting, and piece is established in the final scenes. This way, history is once more glossed over–the negative parts remaining hidden. The audience is not informed about the cruel goings on of genocide for the sake of English imperialism in America.

In both films, a particular image about England is created, especially reinforcing stereotypes such as the English as an industrially advanced nation that is convinced of its own superiority, consisting of very polite and honourable people, who are loyal to the Royals, consume too much alcohol, and solve problems with a cup of tea.

The Native Americans' identity is construed, effectively, by emphasising the differences between them and the English. Whilst the English are shown as a successful, powerful, and advanced nation, the natives are the nature-loving 'savages', who need their help to improve their way of life. They have respect for their surroundings, whereas the English destroy everything in their way. In the sequel, Pocahontas has to learn their manners and hence be 'civilised'. However, also similarities are also shown, typically in the song lyrics, in which both the English and the Native Americans speak about each other in the same way and exhibit the same violent behaviour.

A possible third identity is portrayed by John Smith's GA accent. Since Mel Gibson, in contrast to Ratcliffe's voice actor, does not try to hide his American accent, he depicts the US Americans as the good and heroic, while being the English hero at the same time. His hybrid role points to the future fusion of the English into today's US American culture after successfully settling in Virginia. Additionally, the family values shown are US American and not corresponding to the Native American's traditions. Fruzin'ska argues that the typical Disney protagonist is different than the other characters, listens to their heart and wants to be independent–further US American values which are represented by Pocahontas (2). Individuality is also emphasised as a US American value by van Wormer and Juby (10)ö for example, Pocahontas secretly leaves her tribe to meet Smith.

First, the film depicts the myth of white dominance, then challenges it. Pocahontas prevents a war and saves John Smith, the Englishman. This could be interpreted as a step towards reversing the typical representation of the white as the people in powerful positions. However, afterwards Smith saves Chief Powhatan. This choice of ending superficially depicts both nationalities as equal, thus becoming a part of a hegemonic process in which the subordinate group is subtly incorporated into dominant structures, rather than by force. The concept of hegemony was introduced by Gramsci to describe the relationship between power and culture.[5] It is a form of consent reached through shared meanings spread by a dominant group. Historically, the Native Americans did remain subordinates as a colony dependent on the English, but in the film the two ethnicities are depicted as sharing the same hopes and values; namely, mutual peace.

Not only are the nationalities represented, but also the various social classes of English society. The audience is introduced to the life of the upper class members in the song Mine, Mine, Mine, when Ratcliffe is shown at court. The working class is only subtly represented through the other settlers, like John Smith's friend Thomas. In *Pocahontas II*, the King and his wife Anne are shown playing chess in pompous halls in contrast to the daily life of London's working class in *What a Day in London*. The working class has to wake early in order to trade food and other goods and earn money for their daily lives. However, everyone is shown to be happy, leading to the assumption that class differences do not much matter.

## 6.2 The Invisible Levels: Production, Consumption, Regulation

> Instead of revealing the ethnocentric values that would have been held by the occupying settlers, the film is built on themes of romanticism and universal love. The evil that is associated with the "white man" comes across as a relic of British civilisation, as something that is foreign in character.
> (Juby and van Wormer 11)

To find out more about Disney's intentions and the ideology behind the company, it is important to look beneath what is visible and identify what has been omitted from and added to Pocahontas' story. Firstly, however, it reveals a lot about Walt Disney and his intention to look at general production processes, and his role in them. Once

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[5] For more information on 'hegemony' see Gramsci's *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 1971

again it needs to be emphasised that the processes in the circuit of culture influence each other. Production impacts consumption, but consumer reactions respectively have an impact on production. Hence, no clear boundaries can–and clearly should not–be drawn between the processes.

The Disney company is the largest producer of animation films, having their headquarters in the USA. The films were translated into several languages, such as French, German, Spanish, Italian, Swedish and Dutch (IMDb.com). Posters, trailers and books were additionally produced alongside the medium of the film. Walt Disney used to acquire low-cost books and other sources for inspiration and then assigned his staff the task of Disneyfying them (Schickel 345). His own role was more the one of an organiser and manager:

> "You know," he said, "I was stumped one day when a little boy asked, 'Do you draw Mickey Mouse?' I had to admit I did not draw any more. 'Then you think up all the jokes and ideas?' 'No' I said, 'I don't do that.' Finally he looked at me and said, 'Mr. Disney, just what do you do?'
> " 'Well,' I said, 'sometimes I think of myself as a little bee. I go from one area of the studio to another and gather pollen and sort of stimulate everybody.' I guess that's the job I do."
> (Schickel 33)

However, he did indeed bring to bear his own ideas, and influenced production processes more than it would appear to suggest in this anecdote. Perfection was important to him more than anything (Schickel 145). His employees were allowed, even "encouraged to throw out a whole day's work if they did not like it". Furthermore, they received bonuses for especially qualitative pieces of animation (173). Additionally, Walt Disney was in absolute control of everything. No content about him was allowed to be released without his approval (146). He also "would order almost anything reshot, at no matter what cost, in order to get a film exactly the way he wanted it to be." His products always needed to fully meet his expectations (192). Disney's final goal for the company was to gain "complete control of their own destiny, complete freedom from interference by outsiders in the creation and exploitation of their products" (309). Thus, he rigorously outlined his clear intentions, with Pocahontas, and to the inclusion of all of his other films.

Furthermore, he knew his audience–the consumers of his ideologies–very well. As Schickel pointed out:

> When we seemed to demand an optimistic myth he gave us the unconquerable Mouse. When we seemed to demand the sense of continuity implicit in reminders of our past, he gave us fairy tales in a form we could easily accept.
> (361)

Target consumers are children, or families, but many adults enjoy Disney films too (Schickel 207). By the end of the 1980s, especially, Disney also targeted their films at adults, as they did not only base their story on fairy-tales, but were inspired by "international stories and settings", such as the history of America in Pocahontas, which consequently "has contributed to the shaping of rather unrealistic knowledge of other cultures" (Di Giovanni 96). Since Disney publish their films and merchandise products globally, stereotypes and encoded meanings are spread worldwide. The audience might decode these messages of *Pocahontas I* and *II* in building their set of knowledge about the Native Americans and the English, while also believing the representations shown in the film.

Estimations from 1966, when Disney was about to become one of the most successful companies nationwide, showed that around 240.000.000 people saw a Disney film in this year, 100.000.000 watched a TV show weekly, 800.000.000 consumed books or magazines, 150.000.000 comics, and 80.000.000 people purchased a merchandising product.

To secure his success, Disney deliberately used timeless sources, and his "films, for the most part, are endlessly rereleasable" (Schickel 21). Films were even rented out to schools for educational purposes, which shows that Disney aspired to the education of children vis-à-vis a very specific perception of the world. There were about 200 short films, and each film focused on a specific topic to convey. These films were about one to four minutes long (ibid.). The audience does not only consume the films as such, but also the merchandising around them. There are movies, television programmes, books, songs, Disneyland, toys, and many more products. In 1992, before Lippi-Green conducted her study on accents, they had spent $524.6 million on advertising, and a high amount of it was used for its animated films (Lippi-Green 86). Disneyland is especially crucial for introducing

people to the world of consumption. The idea is to surround the visitors with a relaxed atmosphere in which they feel safe spending money on promoted products (Schickel 319). Through these products, Disney's ideologies are further manifested and strengthened.

*Pocahontas*, in contrast to the films before, can be perceived as the first Disney film to strive for political correctness, as it, on a superficial level, depicts the Indian princess as one of the two heroes of this story, and not in an obvious subordinate position through the hegemonic process mentioned above. Produced in the Clinton era, amongst other films that show cultural otherness, the Disney company seemed to approach identity under the new agenda of signalising their respect for difference (Byrne and McQuillan 101, 109). However, critics did not perceive the film this way, but heavily criticised it for sanitising the cruelties of colonial imperialism. Imperialism and the consequent genocide, was justified by the happy end in which, except for Ratcliffe, all the imperialists changed their mind. They were, as mentioned earlier, "part of an unenlightened group" (Ward 41), and had to be enlightened by Smith's sacrifice and his love for Pocahontas. Kutsuzawa views Pocahontas as "a self-serving and self-justifying interpretation and presentation of colonial history" (59), while Byrne and McQuillan perceive Pocahontas as a "lesson about the stupidity of war based on mutual tribal or ethnic ignorance", portraying both ethnicities as evenly responsible for the Native American's dark past and therefore minimising the English's responsibility for it (110). Because the English are depicted as brave enough to admit their failures in the film, the audience is tempted to forgive their cruelties. The film, therefore, emphasises the heroic elements of the story in portray ing positive image of America's and England's imperialist past. By hiding the ongoing conflicts between the two nations, but depicting a peaceful ending instead, the company "reinvents it [history] as a pedagogical and political tool to secure its own interests" (Giroux 124). They were not ignorant, as they did know about Pocahontas' story, since they even employed Native Americans to ensure better authenticity and to "present a balanced and informed view of the Native Americans" (*Pocahontas* press kit 34). Notwithstanding, they added a certain magic and a love story, and deleted negative portrayals of their ancestors. In the circuit of culture, this would be part of regulation. Through the process of Disneyfication, the practice of

whitewashing history and producing an attractive love story instead, means that the audience is entertained and lured into believing a specific picture of American history.

Another way to distract the audience from the negative sides is by means of using adorable and cute images, like animals or babies: "Their use in the typical Disney film was always to reduce dramatic tension at any point where it excessively threatened audience sensibility" (Schickel 177). Despite being considered as films appropriate for children, there are many violent scenes in *Pocahontas I* and *II*. Meeko, Flint and Percy take away a bit of the tension with their humorous depictions. Furthermore, the portrayal of any content woven into love stories fulfils the same purpose. 13 of the 24 full-length animation features Lippi-Green analysed are love stories (95), and *Pocahontas* is obviously one of them. In the sequel, Disney included more humour and reduced violent behaviour and language. Some jokes are probably intended to increase enjoyment for adults, such as John Smith's puns.

Furthermore, the depiction of characters was regulated. The choice of accents regulates the identities represented; their decision against a British actor to voice John Smith, and RP to be spoken by Ratcliffe can have an impact on how the nationalities are perceived. Pocahontas' age and her looks were changed, and her relationship to John Smith was romanticised. Notably, the way they drew Pocahontas is interesting, as they first began to draw typically Native American faces, but then developed her looks to fit an Anglicised-looking Barbie doll (Juby and van Wormer 11).

Additionally, the rescue scene was changed: Pocahontas' motive for saving Smith is love. Kutsuzawa (57f.) criticises this depiction as presenting Pocahontas as love-driven, which is the only reason why she rescues Smith, and this does not make her a truly heroic character. Smith, however, is the real hero, who saves chief Pohawatan for the sake of peace. Pocahontas is hence depicted as having a selfish agenda, whilst Smith is considerate enough to risk his own life, which puts him in a dominant position.

In *Pocahontas II*, the negative conditions of the English settlement were veneered over; happy families and nice houses are shown. London was depicted as being authentically busy, though the buildings were made more colourful and playful, and thus London was portrayed as a magical and exciting place. Further historical

facts were changed, such as the presence of Shakespeare in London, who had already left the city before Pocahontas arrived, and the exaggerated consumption of tea, which had not been ubiquitous in the early 17th century due to its limited availability and high cost. Disney was not ignorant in his depiction of the settlement, London, and history in this specific way. He was indeed very interested in English architecture and its historical past, and he collected many printed works on English culture. In addition to reading his books, he conducted thorough fieldwork and travelled through Europe frequently (Girveau 212). Thus, any modifications in his films, any discrepancies between the film and historical facts, must have emerged as a concrete idea in the artist's mind, such as depicting images of happiness or easily accessible representations which do not take long to process.

These modifications, however, are less significant than the ones made to sanitise America and England's cruel colonial past, as the former mainly serve the purpose of entertainment, whereas the changes made to past events distort the audience's beliefs about history and national identity.

# CONCLUSION

The schematic of the circuit of culture permits a thorough analysis of the interrelated factors that influence Disney's construction of identity. In the thesis at hand, the circuit of culture was applied with a focus on the representation of the English and Native American identities in *Pocahontas I* and *II*. The analysis of the two films confirms the initial hypothesis that Disney regulates, or rather 'disneyfies', their stereotypical representations of identities which are then spread worldwide to a broad audience of children as well as adults. Popular media such as film and television have grown to be the major conduits of knowledge about the outside world. Especially children adopt portraits of other nationalities and easily take them for granted, as it is their only point of reference (Lippi-Green 81). Criticism of Disney's films is often not taken seriously, and even denied, in the belief that it is 'only a children's film', but–as Burton rightfully notes–"precisely because of their assumed innocence and innocuousness, their inherent ability [...] to defy all conventions of realistic representation", these cartoons offer potential grounds for analysing the hegemonic processes displayed in order to "examine how a dominant culture constructs its subordinates" (23-24). Such processes can easily be perceived due to the employment of globally established stereotypes. Motion pictures, like Disney's animations, do not allow much time to identify the representations shown. Consequently concepts are easily accepted and taken at their face value (Di Giovanni 96). The US American film industry, in particular, aims to shape a specific perception under the false pretence of only providing 'easy entertainment' (101). This apparent innocence is thus, what become the ideological drive "through which Disney promotes conservative ideas and values" (Giroux 34), and should not be underestimated.

Englishness is thereby represented by commonly accepted stereotypes, such as England as the superior nation of the imperialist empire, imposing their knowledge on the natives of the New World, who are, in turn, depicted as 'savages' in need of being civilised. Despite introducing cultures that might be unfamiliar to others around the world, their representations are not accurate, but distorted for the purpose of conveying a very specific ideology. As Richards notes, films on Englishness do not aim to present events historically accurately, but rather to employ notions of "drama, dreams and myths", thereby converting the imperial characters

into ideal representatives of national identity (41). As a result, Disney's animations legitimise certain values and lifestyles, and glamorise and portray them as acceptable and worth encouraging.

One could argue, however, that to draw from familiarity is necessary in animation targeted at children, as they otherwise would not understand the film. Therefore, "a smooth and pleasant reception" by Disney's audience needs to be established (217). Di Giovanni (213f.) describes three stages to achieve this familiarity, especially in a linguistic sense:

- Elements are chosen from a set of cultures that are well known by Western countries

- These cultural references are appropriated to Western knowledge. These are for example expressions which are "assumed to be 'exotic' references from a Western perspective" (214)

- Additional Western knowledge is added to the existing set, such as idiomatic language

As the study in this thesis shows, the two Disney films discussed underwent these processes, until they were fully disneyfied (i.e. transformed) according to the producers' wishes. Whilst studies on representation of otherness, in the sense of Said's *Orientalism*, in late 20th century animation films have already been conducted extensively, the thesis at hand can be used as a basis for further exploration of the depiction of Englishness. Notably, *Tarzan* (1999) offers potential grounds for investigating English imperialist behaviour, along with further stereotypes listed in this thesis. Additional films that could be taken into account are *101 Dalmatians* (1996), *Robin Hood* (1973), *the Winnie the Pooh* series (1966 onwards), and *The Sword in the Stone* (1963). A very interesting follow-up study would be to compare the representations of the English as opposed to the Native Americans in *Pocahontas* to the same nationalities depicted in *Peter Pan* (1953), and to see whether they have changed over the course of more than 40 years. The list continues, but the main point is that Disney offers a large 'playground' for critics who do not want to follow the previous tradition of almost exclusively viewing the films from the perspective of oriental otherness.

Given the stereotypical concepts conveyed in Disney films and other children's animations, it is important to raise awareness and draw attention to these representations (Juby 2). Disney films are part of many childhoods and should–and can–clearly still be enjoyed. However, they should not be taken at their face value and children have to be encouraged to question common representations. Thus, considering my future occupation as a teacher, classroom activities centred around these concepts can help to facilitate knowledge of Disney's influence of the perception of various identities, whether it is ethnicity, gender, or any other.

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# ABSTRACT

## English Abstract

Mass media have increasingly functioned as propagators of specific ideologies, portraying ideal or stereotypical images of national identity, ethnicities, gender, sexuality, and society. By depicting individuals and groups in a very specific light, mass media constructs widely believed views and imposes dominant values onto its consumers. Films in particular, under the cover of providing mere entertainment, can have a very specific agenda in mind. This is especially harmful with children- and family entertainment, as they are often treated as innocent, such as Disney's animated movies. Towards the end of the 20th century, Disney has focused on representing cultural otherness, such as the Native Americans in Pocahontas (1995), the Chinese ethnicity in Mulan (1998), or the Arabic culture in Aladdin (1992). These representations have been widely criticised and investigated.

This thesis sets out to explore Disney's techniques and ideologies behind their representations of national identity in Pocahontas and Pocahontas II - Journey to a New World (1998), however, it examines it from a different perspective than has previously been done. Critics have mostly focused on the Native Americans in the film and the stereotypical depiction of their culture. However, a second nationality, the English, has been widely ignored due to their proximity of history, as they are today's American's ancestors, and their shared Western beliefs and values. Therefore, Englishness and the characteristics that make up English identity as portrayed in the films will be explored and viewed in its broader context of production by applying Du Gay's and Hall's circuit of culture. To investigate the leading hypothesis that Disney depicts Englishness in a highly stereotypical way, the study furthermore examines common stereotypes about the English in order to uncover their roots and hidden truths as a basis for this analysis.

Furthermore, this thesis reveals Disney's attempt to distance today's Americans from their imperialist past and cruel history of genocide. Additionally, they also depict their English ancestors as mostly innocent and blame their past on only a few individuals. For this purpose, they apply very specific strategies that are further discussed under the term 'Disneyfication'.

## German Abstract

Heutzutage verbreiten Massenmedien immer stärker spezielle Ideologien indem sie ideale, vor allem stereotypische, Bilder von nationaler Identität, Gender, Sexualität und unserer Gesellschaft proklamieren. Durch ihre Darstellung von Einzelpersonen und Gruppen, konstruieren die Massenmedien Werte, die von den Konsumenten weitläufig angenommen werden. Speziell Filme können ihre Agenda unter dem Deckmantel der Unterhaltungsprogramme verbreiten. Dies ergibt sich als besonders problematisch im Bereich der Kinder- und Familienfilme, da diese meist als 'unschuldig' betrachtet werden, so wie zum Beispiel Disney's Animationsfilme. Gegen Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts konzentrierte sich Disney darauf, andere Kulturen in den Fokus zu setzen, beispielsweise die Ureinwohner Amerikas in Pocahontas (1995), die chinesische Kultur in Mulan (1998) oder die arabische in Aladdin (1992). Diese Darstellungen wurden bereits weitläufig untersucht und kritisiert.

Diese Diplomarbeit untersucht Disney's Strategien und Ideologie hinter deren Darstellung von nationaler Identität in Pocahontas und dessen Fortsetzung Pocahontas II - Die Reise in eine neue Welt (1998). Sie ermittelt diese jedoch aus einer anderen Perspektive als es bisher getan wurde. Die meisten Kritiken konzentrieren sich auf die Darstellung der amerikanischen Ureinwohner und ignorieren dabei die Anwesenheit einer zweiten Kultur, nämlich den Engländern. Ein Grund dafür ist wahrscheinlich ihre historische Nähe, da sie die Vorfahren der heutigen Amerikaner sind, und des weiteren auch westliche Werte mit ihnen teilen. Aufgrund dieser Beobachtung, werden speziell die im Film repräsentierte Englische Identität und die Merkmale, die diese ausmachen, unter die Lupe genommen und im größeren Produktionskontext betrachtet. Hierfür wird Du Gay's und Hall's 'Circuit of Culture' zur Hand genommen. Um die zugrunde liegende Hypothese, dass Disney Englische Identität als sehr stereotypisch präsentiert, zu prüfen, zeigt diese Studie außerdem die weitläufigsten Stereotypen auf und untersucht sie auf ihre Herkunft und den wahren Kern dahinter.

Als ein wichtiger Punkt enthüllt diese Arbeit außerdem Disney's Versuch, die heutige Amerikanische Kultur von der grausamen Vergangenheit und dem Genozid an den Ureinwohnern zu distanzieren. Des Weiteren werden auch ihre englischen Vorfahren entschuldigt und für die Taten lediglich einzelne Personen zur Verantwortung gezogen. Um diesen Zweck zu erfüllen, nutzt die Firma ganz spezielle Strategien die unter dem Begriff 'Disneyfication' diskutiert werden.