Disney Film Genres and Adult Audiences:
A Tale of Renegotiated Relationships

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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'I have to grow up tomorrow'
(Peter Pan, 1953b)

Acknowledgments

My Mum, Dad, sister and extended family have all been super supportive throughout, even though they don't always know what it is I've been doing.

My Grandma had previously wondered whether my BA in American Studies was a 'Mickey Mouse degree', and I'm pleased to say that I've exceeded her expectations with a Mickey Mouse doctorate!

Finally, I want to thank my wonderful husband Andrew. He's been my cheerleader throughout, enjoying new chances to socialise, exploiting my student discount, enduring my occasional stresses, and encouraging me to succeed. Without him… well, it doesn't bear thinking about. With him, I've finished a PhD within three years. And if that's not love, I don't know what is.

Abstract

Disney films occupy a special place in the viewing habits of children, but their relationships with adult audiences are underappreciated and under-researched. At the same time, many assumptions are made about the concept of a Disney film, which is distinctive enough to warrant being described as a film genre but has not yet been described as such.

Using an innovative mixed methods approach, this research investigates the ways in which adult audiences negotiate and renegotiate their relationships with Disney films. To do so, the research first sets about identifying what a Disney film is, and therefore defining a Tangible Disney Genre based on an analysis of Disney's film output. An output survey analysing data based on 390 Disney films released between 1937 and 2015 allows a more comprehensive understanding of the Disney film than has previously been offered.

Following analysis of the tangible film output, attention turns to the audiences of Disney films, from fans to antagonists. Building on previous work by the Global Disney Audiences Project (Wasko et al., 2001), the research employs a sample survey and focus groups to define a Disney genre that is grounded in shared audience perceptions. This Fantasy Disney Genre is based on data drawn from over 3,500 participants.

Having established the Tangible and Fantasy Disney Genres, the two concepts are compared alongside evidence drawn from interviews and the autoethnographic experiences of the author to determine the effects of any differences and similarities between the genres. Within the comparisons between the two Disney genres is found the space for adult audiences to (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films.

The outcomes of the research include methodological innovations, an updated and comprehensive examination of Disney audiences, and establishment of Disney genres based on both the Hollywood studio's tangible film output and the perceptions of adult audiences.

x

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

AFR	Annual Financial Report
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BOGOF	Buy One Get One Free
BVPD	Buena Vista Pictures Distribution (formerly Buena Vista Distribution Company)
CGI	Computer-Generated Imagery
CP&IM	Consumer Products & Interactive Media (Part of WDC)
F / M / O	Female / Male / Other
FDG	Fantasy Disney Genre
GDAP	Global Disney Audiences Project
IMDb	Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com)
LGBT+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and other sexualities
MCU	Marvel Cinematic Universe
MN	Media Networks (Part of WDC)
P&R	Parks and Resorts (Part of WDC)
PAS	Pixar Animation Studios
RQ	Research Question
SC	Sky Cinema (Satellite film channel brand)
SE	Studio Entertainment (Part of WDC)
TDG	Tangible Disney Genre
WDAS	Walt Disney Animation Studios
WDC	Walt Disney Company
WDP	Walt Disney Productions (1929-1983) / Pictures (1983-present)
WDS	Walt Disney Studios (Filmmaking division of SE)
WDSMP	Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures (formerly BVPD)
WDT	Walt Disney Treasures (DVD series)
WDW	Walt Disney World (Florida theme park)

Chapter 1
Introduction:
Once Upon a Time

> "All my films are for grownups," [Walt] Disney insisted to a reporter from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. "Some people don't ever grow up and some are old the day they are born. But most of us retain a love for fantasy and heroic adventure to the longest day we live. These are the people we make movies for – and I don't care how old they are!"

> (West, 1994, p.192)

Disney films are not just for kids, as the magazines I read insist on pointing out. In the Radio Times the late Barry Norman reassures us that *The Little Mermaid* (1989c) 'is not just a film for children. Adults, too, will find much to enchant them' (2015, p.35), while in the next issue it is explained that the film content of the British streaming service DisneyLife, 'isn't just for kids' (Holmes, 2015, p.55). Two years later, Andrew Collins even titles a featured review of *Frozen* (2013a) 'Not just for kids' (2017, p.31).

It is not just the TV listings magazines: Gay Times is at it too, opening a travel piece on Disneyland Paris by warning that 'whatever you're thinking about Disney 'just being for kids' – stop right now, thank you very much. Disney Adults is here to prove otherwise' (Scott, 2015, p.149). Popular film monthly Empire appears to buck the trend by avoiding the 'not just for kids' refrain in their home media reviews of Disney's *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (1971) and *Inside Out* (2015g). However, they feel it necessary to point out the former's 'Oscar-winning visual effects' (de Semlyen, 2015, p.149) and that a shot in the latter was 'lifted entirely from Hitchcock's *Marnie* [(1964b)]' (Nathan, 2015, p.139). Both remarks serve to remind readers that although these are Disney films, they are worthwhile for serious (adult) film audiences through their award-winning legitimacy and homages to classic Hollywood. The five-star *Inside Out* review

even ends with the reassurance that 'Pixar are serious filmmakers' (Nathan, 2015, p.139).

As an adult who enjoys Disney films, theme parks and merchandise without any sense of guilt or irony, these reassurances come across as both patronising and frustrating. Enjoying entertainment that is supposedly written and produced for (but not made by) children, or even for a broader 'family' audience, can put a person in a defensive mood. In the past I have been guilty of looking down on fans of children's literature, confused as to why adults would want to read about Harry Potter when there are so many books out there written for adult audiences. I eventually realised how short-sighted my stance was, considering my interest in Disney, which led me to wonder why it should matter that some adults enjoy entertainment that is written off (if it is written about at all) as juvenile, corrupting, or trivial (Giroux and Pollock, 2010, Harrington, 2014, Ward, 2003).

Walt Disney himself acknowledged that his films were for everyone, not just children, noting that 'you're dead if you aim only for kids. Adults are only kids grown up, anyway' (quoted in Smith, 2001, p.136). The same sentiment was echoed by the present chief creative officer of both Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studios, John Lasseter, when he said that 'what's really important is that in the films that we make, people tend to look at animation and say it's just for kids – it's not. It never has been' (The Film Programme, 2016d). Lasseter also highlights the link between animation and children, terms that have become as synonymous with each other as Disney is with animation. If those in charge of producing films for Disney do not think their work is just for children, why do I keep reading reassurances that Disney is not just for kids? It seems that the adult readerships of the aforementioned magazines are believed to need some reassurance before choosing to watch Disney films.

1.1 Research Rationale

The purpose of this research is to understand how adult audiences negotiate their relationships with Disney films when they are so frequently considered to be children's entertainment, despite the best efforts of the media commentators

above. In order to understand these relationships, it is essential to first define what a Disney film is, as well as how audiences perceive Disney films.

This research focuses on the films produced by Walt Disney Studios (WDS) as the pre-eminent purveyor of children's entertainment, but it is not the only film studio producing films for young audiences that are eagerly consumed by adult audiences. Recent examples include the Young Adult literary adaptations of Harry Potter (2001-2011) and the Hunger Games (2012-2015); comic book franchises such as Spider-Man (2002+) and X-Men (2000+); and toy-inspired blockbusters like *Transformers* (2007f) and *The Lego Movie* (2014g).

The tenor of critical attitudes towards adults who profess to enjoy so-called children's entertainment is exemplified by an article in the *New York Times* in response to the literary Harry Potter phenomenon that also suggested enjoying cartoon shorts 'more than a little is a waste of adult time' (Safire, 2000, p.A27). In 2015 when the University of East Anglia hosted a 'Symfrozium', an academic conference dedicated to the wildly popular Disney film *Frozen* (2013a), it was 'pre-emptively criticised by the Sun and the Daily Mail' (Lynskey, 2015) for focusing on such a seemingly frivolous subject.

David Buckingham has acknowledged the prevalence of such dismissive attitudes to children's entertainment, identifying the belief that 'to proclaim one's enjoyment of mindless pleasure, to profess an enthusiasm for all things American, or to celebrate one's infantile desires are simply untenable positions – at least if one wishes to avoid the ridicule or disdain' (2001, p.284) of cynical media commentators. In contrast, student audiences have proven to be resistant to such critical cynicism, justifying their 'pleasurable participation in Disney film and its apolitical agendas [as]: it's only for children, it's only fantasy, it's only a cartoon, and it's just good business' (Bell et al., 1995b, p.4).

There is a perception that Disney films are child-friendly (not to mention childish) entertainments that are perfectly acceptable to enjoy when young, but are not worth the time of more discerning adults who have a wealth of more appropriate, grown-up entertainment choices available to them. Disney films are repeatedly positioned in the public mind by both Disney and media

commentators as the flag-bearers for family-friendly fare ahead of all other Hollywood studios. Joel Best and Kathleen S. Lowney have noted that none of 'Disney's rivals have clear moral reputations, […] in contrast, the name Disney has become closely linked in the public mind with decent, family-oriented entertainment' (2009, p.433).

Many commentators and academics discuss Disney and Disney films with an implicit assumption that they and their readers understand what is meant by these terms. The shared assumption about what 'Disney' means can be seen in easily understood terms such as 'Disneyesque', 'Disneyfication' and 'Disneyization', a concept that 'seeks to increase the appeal of goods and services that might otherwise appear mundane and uninteresting' (Bryman, 2004, p.159). These (pejorative) uses of the Disney name tend to relate to a very specific version of Disney, based on theme parks or animation, but the Walt Disney Company (WDC) has much more wide-ranging interests, from television to live-action filmmaking.

The existence of a Disney genre can be deduced from the shared understanding of the concept of Disney film by audiences and commentators, but such a genre has not yet been identified, although Janet Wasko has previously defined the concept of 'Classic Disney' (2001c, p.110) as it relates to various aspects of the Disney cultural offering. If film genres can be produced by both texts and audiences (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012, p.194-196), then it is possible that there are two Disney genres, one based on the films produced by Disney and one based on audience perceptions of Disney, and these genres need to be understood in order to appreciate adult audiences' relationships with Disney films.

Janet Wasko has previously attempted to debunk the myth that 'Disney is only for kids' (2001a, p.238), recognising that there are 'many products and activities that Disney aims directly at adults' (2001a, p.250). In the years since Wasko's myth-busting endeavours, the WDC has gone from 'at best, a period of strategic uncertainty, and at worst, a period of extended failure' (Pallant, 2013, p.125) to owning the companies behind the multi-million dollar Toy Story (Pixar), Star Wars (Lucasfilm) and Avengers (Marvel) franchises. While the WDC's 'underlying motive – the profit motive – endures' (Wasko, 2001a, p.246),

Disney's recent acquisitions have challenged the idea of what a Disney films is, and Disney has become an ever more dominant part of the cultural landscape in a way that its Hollywood studio peers have failed to match.

In his foreword to *The Walt Disney Film Archives: The Animated Movies 1921-1968* (Kothenschulte, 2016), John Lasseter notes that 'people sometimes describe something as "Disney" as if it were a single look and style, when in truth the look of the studio's work was continuously evolving. Films were influenced by new artists joining the studio or coming into their own, new technologies being developed, and new styles arising in the culture of the day' (Lasseter, 2016, p.7). Although he was talking about animated films released during the period 1921-1968, Lasseter's words can be broadened to encompass the wider world of Disney film that includes Pixar, Lucasfilm and Marvel. Disney films have evolved over the last 80 years, but have audience perceptions evolved along with them? This research aims to find out.

Janet Wasko recognised that although 'Disney is seen as a major component of children's culture, […] adults are important consumers of Disney products as well' (2001c, p.224). In the 1980s, when Michael Eisner and Frank Wells took over management of Walt Disney Productions[1], 'Disney characters suddenly assumed a certain chic in the fashion world. Men and women – *adults* – appeared on the streets of New York and Hollywood and Paris wearing jackets and sweaters emblazoned with the faces of Minnie and Mickey Mouse' (Taylor, 1987, p.242, italics in original). Such appropriation of Disney characters by adults has only increased since the 1980s, particularly since the acquisition of Marvel and Star Wars, but to date no attention has been paid to these adult consumers. That 'the few audience studies in existence focus on adult's memories of Disney products and narratives' (Drotner, 2004, p.139), rather than the pleasures adult audiences draw from Disney's output, perpetuates the idea that exposure to Disney is only significant during childhood.

There is a 'long tradition of scientific study on children and media' (Roberts and Foehr, 2003, p.6), including the effects of screen violence and

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[1] Walt Disney Productions changed its name to the Walt Disney Company in 1986 because 'a study found that the name Walt Disney Productions connoted involvement in motion pictures and television, slighting the company's other enterprises' (Taylor, 1987, p.243).

sexual content in the media on children, since children are 'generally assumed to be more vulnerable than adults to negative influences of television content' (Huston et al., 1994, p.5). Studies involving children and media have tended to focus on television, which is of course a primary conduit for Disney films outside of the cinema, through home media, streaming and dedicated Disney channels. In their classification guidelines, the BBFC acknowledges that 'media effects research and expert opinion on issues of suitability and harm can be inconclusive or contradictory' (BBFC, 2014, p.4) and points to the importance of audience research in determining how their age classifications are awarded.

Rather than investigating the *effects* of Disney films on adult audiences, this research will explore the relationships that adult audiences have with Disney films, including how these relationships are negotiated and renegotiated based on their perceptions of Disney films. Although adult relationships with the WDC and its output have been the subject of previous research (notably by Janet Wasko and the Global Disney Audiences Project / GDAP), to date no one has focused on adult audiences and their relationships with Disney films and asked why and how these relationships work. The WDC has changed significantly since the GDAP research took place almost two decades ago, thus this research presents an opportunity for an up-to-date assessment of Disney film output and Disney film audiences.

If it is true that 'people seek out entertainment that reflects and reinforces aspects of their personalities' (Rentfrow et al., 2011, p.251) then considering who the adults are that seek out Disney films will have implications about aspects of their personalities. Such audiences may be purposefully participating in a 'blurring of the boundary between youth and adulthood' (Buckingham and Kehily, 2014, p.6), or it may be that adult audiences watch Disney films 'because nostalgia and intertextuality are key components of their postmodern identities and important tools in the continued understanding of contemporary society' (Geraghty, 2008, p.197). Do adult audiences enjoy these films heedless of the problems with gender and race identified by some academics (Bell et al., 1995a, Haddock et al., 2003), or are their relationships with so-called children's entertainment constrained by 'the habits and attitudes of upper-middle-class

males' (Alasuutari, 1999, p.12) who are perceived to be responsible for defining cultural hierarchies?

By addressing an unexplored aspect of previous Disney academic research and taking Disney's adult audiences seriously, I aim to explore how audiences perceive Disney films, how this perception matches up to the Disney genre found in the films that Disney produces, and how adult audiences negotiate and renegotiate their relationships with Disney films. I will consider how Disney films' 'themes are received, accepted, and/or reworked by consumers or audiences' (Wasko, 2001c, p.225), and will investigate whether adult audiences of Disney films really are reluctant to admit their admiration or disdain for Disney, and the ways in which they (re)negotiate their relationships with this entertainment giant.

1.2 The Power of Disney: An Example

An example of a particularly strong relationship between Disney films and adult audiences can be seen in the exceptional case of Owen Suskind, subject of *Life, Animated*, a book by his journalist father Ron Suskind (2014) and the subsequent documentary (2016g). As a toddler, Owen developed autistic behaviours that effectively rendered him incapable of communication. He subsequently began to regularly watch and re-watch Disney films on video, as his exasperated parents discovered that, despite initial reservations, 'the movies were an instant babysitter, a group activity, something parents and kids could do together, and always within reach' (Suskind, 2014, p.22).

Over the years, Owen used his relationship with Disney films to help him learn to communicate. They encouraged him to speak, using dialogue parroted from the films (quite literally, when Owen's father mimicked the voice of Iago the parrot from *Aladdin* (1992a) to carry on a conversation with his son for the first time in years), and helped Owen to understand the world around him, a process that continued into adulthood. The exaggerated emotions of animated Disney characters proved to be excellent primers for recognising human emotions. Owen even taught himself to read and write by studying film credits. The power

of Disney films on Owen's life is beautifully illustrated in his words prior to leaving home for college as a young adult:

> The movie doesn't change. That is what I love about it. But I change. And each time, it looks different to me. It was scary when I was small. And then I understood that it was about finding beauty, even in places where it's hard to find. But now I realise it's about something else. A bigger thing. It's about finding beauty in yourself, because only then will you really be able to really see it in others, and everywhere. (Owen Suskind, quoted in Suskind, 2014, p.314)

Ron Suskind discovered that Owen was not the only child with autism who used Disney films as a development tool, noting that 'lots of ASD [Autism spectrum disorder] kids have bonded with Disney movies' (2014, p.250). Although this is an example of how Disney films have powerfully affected a minority of their audience, it is illustrative of the way that Disney films should not be dismissed out of hand as trivial or harmful. On discovering the power that Disney films had over children and adults with ASD, Suskind also observed that 'it becomes immediately clear that these students have rarely, if ever, had their passion for Disney treated as something serious and meaningful' (2014, p.317). In the same way, this research seeks to treat adult audiences' passions (whether positive or negative) for Disney films as something serious and meaningful.

1.3 Thesis Structure

In Chapter 2 I conduct a review of academic literature pertaining to Disney (particularly the study of Disney audiences), reception and audience studies, and genre studies. This review highlights gaps in the literature and provides rationale for the research questions introduced in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 opens with an explanation of the study's three Research Questions (RQs). An operational definition of 'Disney film' is also offered, which is important for identifying the scope of this research. The three research questions are then put into context in terms of how they fit in with the Walt

Disney Company at large, both corporately and historically, as well as in the contexts of Hollywood and the genre of family films more widely.

Chapter 4 explores the methodology and the mixed methods that were considered most appropriate to effectively answer the three research questions. The mixed methods approach is discussed and justified, before the methods designs for each of the five chosen methods are presented with reference to academic literature. Finally, the ways in which these methods were implemented in this particular research project are discussed.

Having set out the scope of the project in the first four chapters, the final four chapters are concerned with the analysis of the original data that has been gathered to answer the three research questions. Chapters 5-7 each focus on a particular research question, with Chapter 8 being the conclusion.

Chapter 5 addresses RQ1: what exactly is a Disney film? Here I discuss the notion of the Tangible Disney Genre that was introduced in Chapter 3, and draw upon data gathered on Disney's tangible film output.

Chapter 6 addresses RQ2: how do adults perceive Disney films? Here the Fantasy Disney Genre, again introduced in Chapter 3, is examined through analysis of data derived from audience research and my own experiences.

Chapter 7 draws together analysis from the previous two chapters to address RQ3: how do adult audiences (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films? Here the differences between the Tangible and Fantasy Disney genres that were defined in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively are assessed, along with the consequences for adult relationships with Disney films.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis and the research, presenting an overview of the research from beginning to end, highlighting the original contributions that have been made, and indicating possible future research options.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Overview of existing Disney research, particularly focusing on the Global Disney Audiences Project and other Disney audience research, plus audiences/reception studies, and genre studies.

Chapter 3 Research Questions, Context & Definitions

Introducing the 3 RQs, situating the research in context of the Walt Disney Company, Hollywood, and the family film genre, and explaining the operational definition of the Disney film concept that sets the scope of the research.

Chapter 4 Methodology & Methods

Reviewing the methodology and methods chosen to answer the research questions, as well as those that were discarded. Method design is discussed for those methods chosen, followed by how these were implemented in practice.

Chapter 5 RQ1: What exactly is a Disney film? The Tangible Disney Genre

Analysis and discussion of the first research question.
Definition of the Tangible Disney Genre (TDG).

Chapter 6 RQ2: How do audiences perceive Disney films? The Fantasy Disney Genre

Analysis and discussion of the second research question.
Definition of the Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG).

Chapter 7 RQ3: How do adult audiences (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films? Comparing the TDG and the FDG

Analysis and discussion of the third research question.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

Overview of the research, description of original contributions, and suggestions for future research.

Figure 1: Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

It has become a cliché to say that much has been written about Disney, and indeed you could fill several libraries with books that have been written about Disney the man, Disney the company and Disney the brand. Among the many child-friendly comic, story, and activity books are weightier tomes aimed at adult consumers[2]. Such works include academic text books, behind-the-scenes making-of-the-film books, collections of archival Disney comic strips, and Disney Deluxe Editions, which cover subjects as diverse as Walt Disney's collaboration with Salvador Dali (Bossert, 2015) and *All Aboard: The Wonderful World of Disney Trains* (Amendola, 2015).

There is also plenty of non-literary Disney merchandise available for adult consumption. For example, across 2014 and 2015 Walt Disney Records released the Legacy Collection, twelve CD soundtracks from Disney animated films, with sleeve notes, original artwork and bonus tracks, that were geared towards collectors[3]. Meanwhile, bonus features on Disney DVD and Blu-ray releases cater for adult viewers with documentaries on film production and company history alongside games and activities for young children.

All of the books and merchandise mentioned above are important in understanding the context in which Disney films are released, but it would be impossible and unnecessary to provide an overview of everything that has been written about Disney. Instead, I will review several key works of academic literature from the field of Disney Studies, which has generally been produced without Disney's cooperation, to highlight gaps in the existing research that will be addressed in the present study.

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[2] A definitive list of such books can be found at Disney author Didier Ghez's The Ultimate Disney Book Network: http://www.didierghez.com/index.htm.

[3] The collection also included a 3 CD album of songs from the Disneyland theme park. A thirteenth entry in the series was released in August 2017, the debut of the *Robin Hood* (1973a) soundtrack on CD.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the present research is interested in adult audiences and their relationships with Disney films, thus I will also review relevant literature pertaining to audiences and reception studies, paying particular attention to prior Disney audience research, notably the Global Disney Audience Project (GDAP) (Wasko et al., 2001). This research will also explore the notion that Disney can be described as a film genre, therefore this chapter will conclude with a consideration of some key works in the field of genre studies.

2.2 Disney Studies

Walt Disney famously said that 'we just try to make a good picture. And then the professors come along and tell us what we do' (quoted in Bryman, 1995, p.v). So-called 'professors' have been theorising about Disney's output for decades, with Soviet film theorist Sergei Eisenstein being a prominent commentator on Disney animation in the 1930s and 1940s (see Eisenstein et al., 1986). Richard Schickel's *The Disney Version*, begun prior to Walt Disney's death in 1966 and first released in 1968, was the first book-length study to subject Disney's life and achievements to 'judicious questioning' (1997, p.4), and has remained in print ever since.

Disney scholar Amy M. Davis claims that 'the field of Disney Studies […] has grown by leaps and bounds' (2013, p.247) since the Disney Renaissance, which is commonly defined as the decade book-ended by the animated features *The Little Mermaid* (1989c) and *Tarzan* (1999f) (Pallant, 2013, p89), when Disney animation recaptured the critical and popular imagination after years of stagnation. Research in the field of Disney Studies has tended towards textual analyses of Disney's television shows, theme parks and films (with a distinct focus on animation), as well as biographies of CEOs Walt Disney and Michael Eisner[4], although these are usually more journalistic than academic in focus.

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[4] Michael Eisner was CEO of the Walt Disney Company from 1984 to 2005, and is considered to be responsible for turning Disney from a minor Hollywood film studio and theme park administrator into one of the biggest, most diversified media giants in the world.

Davis admits that 'while there are some excellent, balanced, non-politically biased works' (2013, p.248) in the field, there are also many accounts that select Disney as an easy target to deconstruct in the most vehement terms. Examples of such works include the sensationalist *Walt Disney: Hollywood's Dark Prince* (Eliot, 1993), described by animation historian Michael Barrier as 'easily the worst Disney biography I've ever read' (Barrier, 2006)[5]. In the more academically-minded *Deconstructing Disney* (Byrne and McQuillan, 1999) the authors dissect animated Disney films released since 1989 with reference to no less than: 'Kant, Hegel, Marx, Freud, Kafka, Hugo, phenomenology, economics, psychoanalysis, colonialism, post-colonialism, neo-colonialism, Europe, America, Africa, China, television, nuclear war, apartheid, theme parks and cigarettes' (p.168).

While criticism of Disney is a perfectly valid pursuit, some commentators could be accused of jumping aboard an anti-Disney bandwagon since the Walt Disney Company's (WDC) global reach and position in the lives of apparently impressionable children 'makes Disney an attractive target for all sorts of social critiques in a way that its [rival studios] are not' (Best and Lowney, 2009, p.433). Conversely, there are numerous books championing Disney and everything they do, written by either fans or studio-approved fan-scholars, vying for the attention and wallets of Disney's literate fan base. Both camps are responsible for perpetuating the idea that Disney deals only in family-friendly animation by inundating consumers with books focused narrowly on these subjects.

The majority of literature about the WDC relates to animated features, particularly the 54 films in the Disney Classics-branded canon[6], and Davis' studies of women (2006) and men (2013) in Disney animation are fine

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[5] Michael Barrier, also an author of an unauthorised biography of Walt Disney, *The Animated Man: A Life of Walt Disney* (2007), also has little time for Neal Gabler's *Walt Disney: The Biography* (2007), which purports to be both definitive and authorised by Disney executives (and lawyers). Barrier criticises Gabler's use of Eliot's work as a source, which he says is 'packed with errors and distortions' (Barrier, 2006) about Walt Disney's supposed anti-Semitism, his role as an FBI informant, and myriad other details that continue to fuel popular myths about Walt Disney.

[6] 54 Disney Classics had been released up to the end of 2015. These are considered to be the most prestigious animated films released by Disney, and by no means include all of Disney's animated film output. Despite the designation, Classics are not just historically important films, as so-called Classics continue to be produced on an almost annual basis today. A list of the Disney Classics can be found here: http://www.imdb.com/list/ls003947956/ [Accessed: 8 February 2017].

examples of such literature. Evidence from the Global Disney Audiences Project (GDAP) suggests that it is such family-friendly fantasies that audiences perceive of as Disney films.

Since 1937 the WDC and its subsidiary film studios have been involved in the production and/or distribution of almost 1,500 feature films[7]. These films encompass every genre from documentary to science fiction to comedy. Of these 1,500 films, approximately 12% were animated in whole or in part, with the 54 Classics making up less than 4% of the total feature output of Disney's film studios. It is this 4% that seemingly represents the WDC brand to most audiences and contributes to the 'omnipresent and historically charged influence of Disney' (Wells, 1998, p.225). However, when the definition of Disney film that will be discussed in Chapter 3 is considered, of the 390 identified Disney films, 27% have been animated in whole or in part, with the Classic canon making up 14% of the total[8].

Critical commentary on Disney's films often disregards large swathes of the WDC's live-action output to support both positive and negative arguments. Richard Schickel is dismissive of Disney's live-action films, claiming that 'there is really very little point in discussing these movies critically' (1997, p.299). Conversely, Douglas Brode believes that live-action films such as *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954) are valuable because they 'revealed more of [Walt Disney's] personal ideology in such fare than in elaborate animated classics' (2005, p.5). In his reassessment of Disney's oeuvre, Brode draws upon Disney's live-action and animated features, shorts, and television serials to argue that Disney's films represent a 'distillation of the human condition, experienced through the wondrous eyes of a child, then offered back to the public (children and the child that still exists somewhere in every adult)' (2005, p.257). These comments referenced films released during Walt Disney's

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[7] This approximate figure includes films released theatrically in the US and abroad, as well as made-for-TV movies, and those released directly to home video, between 1937 and the end of 2015. The figures in this paragraph are taken from my own preliminary research.

[8] In contrast, of the 735 films excluded from the definition of Disney film used in this research, just 2% of those films produced by Miramax, Dimension, Touchstone and Hollywood Pictures were animated. Of the 88 films released directly to home video, many of which were spin-offs from the Classics canon, 64% were animated.

lifetime, before his death in 1966, and their relevance to Disney's current film output is still up for debate.

There have been several edited collections about various aspects of the WDC's activities. *Disney Discourse* (Smoodin, 1994) was put together in the midst of the Disney Renaissance and provides 'a look at the multiple discourses about Disney produced by the corporation and by those outside it, and generated by a variety of Disney products' (Smoodin, 1994, p.2) including films, theme parks and Disney's business practices. Within the section on reception, for example, Richard deCordova (1994) notes how the consumption of Mickey Mouse merchandise by American children in the 1930s occurred without criticism from academics.

From Mouse to Mermaid (Bell et al., 1995a) explores how gender, race, and other identities are coded in a range of Disney films. Although the contributors branch out from the oft-studied animated features with the inclusion of Touchstone releases *Billy Bathgate* (1991b) and *Pretty Woman* (1990a), the analytical methods employed fail to take into account experiences drawn from general audiences. Released a decade later, *Rethinking Disney* (Budd and Kirsch, 2005) built upon previous Disney Studies to 'focus on new or previously unexamined aspects of the Disney phenomenon' (Budd, 2005, p.15) with a focus on the tensions between Disney's public image and its private business practices. However, contributors to this volume still mainly concerned themselves with Disney's animated output, as well as the Disney theme parks[9].

In *The Disney Fetish* (2014) Seán J. Harrington draws on Lacanian psychoanalysis and post-Marxist cultural studies 'to develop a structural understanding of how gratification operates within Disney media' (p.8). Harrington takes a narrow view of Disney films confined to the animated features released during Walt Disney's lifetime, stating that 'the Disney audience is diverse and yet uniform, in that all viewers are engaged and addressed as children by the Disney film-makers' (2014, p.11). Harrington acknowledges that 'an in-depth study of the internal dynamic between Disney,

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[9] The Disney theme parks have their own place in the wider Disney literature, but although academic research has been carried out on park visitors (or 'Guests' as they are referred to in Disney's company language), it is not relevant to the concerns of the current research.

Buena Vista' (2014, pp.216-217), Miramax and Touchstone would benefit from application of the theoretical structures suggested in his work, so he is aware of these other studios.

Harrington and other Disney scholars often rely on textual analyses of a narrow selection of films to draw their conclusions about the Disney film canon and the WDC. As a result, such conclusions have limited value beyond the films that have been singled out for analysis. Very few works in the Disney Studies field, including those concerned with the effects of Disney on children, have actually asked audiences for their input, or have placed the works being studied in the context of the wider Disney canon, or indeed have tried to analyse the Disney canon as a whole.

Several important works on Disney that do consider audiences and the wider Disney canon have been overseen by Janet Wasko. These include: *Understanding Disney* (2001c), which attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of the whole Disney phenomenon; *Challenging Disney Myths* (2001a), a paper in which Wasko attempts to challenge long-held assumptions about Walt Disney and his company[10]; and *Dazzled by Disney?* (Wasko et al., 2001), which represents the largest Disney audiences survey to date (see subsection 2.2.1).

Wasko has drawn on previous Disney Studies work and her own research to split Disney audiences into seven archetypes, which she acknowledges relate best to adult audiences because 'many children are extremely positive about Disney, but sometimes lose interest as they mature' (Wasko, 2001c, p196). The archetypes range from Fanatics, Fans, and Consumers (who can be further categorised as enthusiastic, admiring, or reluctant) to Cynics, Uninterested, Resisters, and Antagonists, representing various levels of interest and commitment to Disney.

Disney Resisters include 'those who prefer other products or brands, or have *grown out of* Disney and its "magic spell" and now basically reject Disney and its products' (Wasko, 2001c, p.210, my emphasis). The suggestion that a

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[10] The paper was republished under the title 'A less than wonderful "world": challenging Disney myths' in *Debating Disney* (Brode and Brode, 2016).

person can grow out of Disney is as troublesome to a Fanatic/Fan/Consumer as the idea that a person would want to do such a thing. It also suggests that those adults who enjoy Disney are somehow not grown up, that they are stuck in a Peter Pan-like state of permanent childhood.

Wasko's broad audience categories are problematic in terms of (self-) identification with these archetypes. For example, a person who fits the criteria of a Disney Fanatic may not self-identify as such, preferring the softer Fan, although they might be described pejoratively as a Fanatic by a Disney Antagonist. Conversely, an Antagonist or a Resistor would probably be quite proud to openly label themselves as being opposed to Disney, seeing such labels as badges of honour.

Although at opposite ends of the Disney audience archetypes spectrum, Antagonists and Fan/atics often express their responses to Disney in similar ways by actively creating and sharing their interpretations of Disney products in the form of art, animation, and/or academic texts. These interpretations may be either complementary or highly critical of Disney and their films but have in common the desire to share such particularly strong viewpoints with others. Wasko notes that 'little work has been directed at those fans who reinterpret and/or subvert Disney products… [and that] much more work is needed in analysing Disney audiences, especially in identifying examples of reinterpretation, resistance, and subversion' (Wasko, 2001c, p.217).

Few academics (Drotner, 2004, Martin and Yecies, 2004, McCulloch, 2013) have taken up the task of analysing Disney audiences since Wasko tried to understand Disney over 15 years ago, and since then opportunities to openly reinterpret and/or subvert Disney products have only increased with the growth of social media. Opportunities to interpret Disney have also changed substantially by Disney's billion dollar acquisitions of other film studios, including Marvel, Lucasfilm and Pixar. Disney now includes franchises and properties that have not just brought their own fan bases with them, but have also influenced Disney's core businesses, from animation to theme parks and television.

One of the myths that Wasko sought to debunk in *Challenging Disney Myths* (2001a) is that Disney's products are aimed solely at children, when

there are in fact 'many products and activities that Disney aims directly at adults, for example, Touchstone, Hollywood, and Miramax films' (2001a, p.250)[11]. Wasko also noted that when people 'refer to "Disney", the association is ordinarily connected to those *clearly labelled* Disney products aimed at the "family" market' (2001a, p.249, my emphasis), a claim backed up by findings from the Global Disney Audiences Project (see 2.2.1). The idea of Disney films being clearly labelled as Disney products – by displaying Walt Disney's name in the film's credits, promotional materials and merchandise – will be an important part of determining the operational definition of 'Disney film' used in this research, discussed in section 3.2.

In their discussion of animated shorts during World War II, Michael S. Shull and David E. Wilt highlighted the difference between modern television cartoons produced and aired 'during a specific time period which has been proven to be watched almost entirely by children of a determinable age [and] theatrical cartoons [made in the early twentieth century, which] were made for the entertainment of general audiences in movie theatres: for viewers of *all* ages' (1987, p.6, italics in original). Before the advent of (cheap) television animation, the medium was a universally accepted form of entertainment in cinemas, thus the idea that animation, synonymous with Disney films, is solely for children can claim to be a more modern invention than the medium itself.

Animation historian Michael Barrier debunks the notion that animation is for children in his exhaustive account of the Golden Age of animation, making the claim that 'the greatest pleasures to be found in the best Hollywood cartoons are far more accessible to adults than to children' (2003, p.x). According to Barrier, while all ages may enjoy animated fare, adults can actually experience greater pleasures from animation. The pleasures and accessibility that animation affords would be difficult to quantify and compare between children and adults to determine which of the generations gains the most, but Barrier's point about adults being able to draw pleasure from animation is an important one that is not often acknowledged.

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[11] It should be noted that since Wasko made this claim Disney has sold Miramax, retired the Hollywood Pictures label, and reserved the Touchstone banner for films distributed in conjunction with DreamWorks.

It is worth noting that although the films that Disney targeted directly at adult audiences through its now defunct Touchstone, Hollywood and Miramax studios were almost exclusively live-action productions, it would not be correct to conclude that all Disney live-action films are or were aimed at adults. This line of thought also overlooks the live-action films produced by the supposedly more family-friendly, and child-centred Walt Disney Studios, rather than its predominantly adult-focused former subsidiary studios.

Since Wasko wrote about Disney and Disney audiences in 2001 the WDC and WDS have been through significant changes. While WDS' more adult-focused studios have been sold off or retired, Pixar, Marvel and Lucasfilm have been acquired and have produced critically acclaimed films for all ages, which have also had a positive impact on Disney's box office revenue, as well as on the direction of Hollywood filmmaking generally (particularly relating to the concept of a 'shared universe' approach to film franchises).

I propose that the notion of Disney and what constitutes a Disney film, and thus a Disney audience, has evolved, at least in tangible film output terms, if not in the perceptions of audiences. Wasko also neglected to survey the Disney films themselves, instead referring to years of admittedly 'unsystematic research' (2001c, p.195). A systematic approach to Disney's film output is therefore needed to better understand the ways that Disney films have changed and continue to change since 1937. As well as an up-to-date, methodical examination of the films, a more systematic approach to Disney audiences is also necessary. Existing Disney audience research will be reviewed in the following two subsections.

2.2.1 The Global Disney Audiences Project

In *Challenging Disney Myths* (2001a) Janet Wasko claimed that Disney is not a unique and different company, yet in the same year's *Dazzled by Disney?* (2001) she justified the Global Disney Audiences Project (GDAP) by stating that Disney 'is a special case because of its distinctive brand name, which is associated around the world with childhood, family, fantasy, and fun' (Wasko, 2001b, p.3). The GDAP represented 'an attempt to analyse the reception of

Disney products internationally' (Wasko et al., 2001, p.4) by carrying out audience surveys and focus groups in 18 countries across the world[12]. Participants in the GDAP research had an average age of 21.12 years (Wasko et al., 2001, p.357), but discussion related specifically to the relationships that adult audiences have with Disney were limited to David Buckingham's chapter on British audiences in the GDAP's published findings (2001).

The GDAP survey employed a questionnaire that received 1,252 responses from participants in 53 countries, resulting in a helpful yet admittedly limited 'initial attempt to research how audiences use and understand Disney' (Phillips, 2001, p.40). Responses showed that 97.5% of participants had 'come into contact' with Disney films at some point in their lives, compared with figures of 49.5% for the Disney Channel, 63.6% for the Disney Store, and 53.4% for Disney comics (Wasko et al., 2001, p.358). Although the expression employed in the GDAP questionnaire – 'coming into contact' – does not necessarily mean the same as watching Disney films, 97.5% still represents a significant number of respondents, although those who responded may have self-selected as people already interested in Disney.

Over 80% of all GDAP questionnaire respondents thought that Disney promoted the following values: family, fantasy, fun, good over evil, happiness, imagination, love/romance, and magic (Wasko et al., 2001, pp.358-9). Conversely, fewer than 50% believed Disney promotes individualism, patriarchy, patriotism, racism, respect for difference, technological progress, thriftiness and work ethic (Wasko et al., 2001). There thus seemed to be a mainly positive reception to most aspects of Disney entertainment media, albeit with some dissenting voices, and again this could have been the result of selection bias.

The GDAP questionnaire asked respondents 'how much contact have you had with Disney materials in general?' (Wasko et al., 2001, p.346), providing a prompted list of Disney media, including films, video games and magazines, for them to respond to. The respondents had to use their own understanding and knowledge of Disney's media output to answer these

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[12] The countries involved were: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Greece, India, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Norway, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, UK, and USA.

questions, so it is entirely possible that the films, video games and magazines that informed their perceptions of Disney media were not actually Disney media – other research has shown that audiences confuse non-Disney animated films with Disney films (see discussion of Paul Wells' research in subsection 2.2.2). Respondents' perceptions of Disney products were not explicitly under investigation by the GDAP, although the responses were informed by such perceptions.

When each country's project leader questioned respondents further in local focus groups, they concentrated on positioning the distinctly American Disney brand within their local political and cultural landscapes. GDAP's organisers concluded that 'one of the strongest findings of the study was the commonly shared understanding of what Disney means [and] they generally agreed on the core values represented in the company's products' (Wasko and Meehan, 2001, p.334), namely 'fun' and 'fantasy'. However much these values are shared and understood by the study's respondents, I suggest that it might be more appropriate to say that these values, and the GDAP itself, are associated with a perception of Disney, or a fantasy version of Disney, rather than a tangible version of Disney that is analogous to the WDC's media output.

For the British GDAP case study, David Buckingham (2001) convened focus groups of university students and teachers to discuss their experiences of Disney, including reactions to Disney's 'Americanness', the values that the Company was thought to represent, and the influences it was thought Disney had on children. It is notable that no children were questioned about such influences, although some of the academics were parents, and all participants had encountered Disney through their own childhoods. Buckingham was not concerned with the content of the views expressed by his British participants but about '*how* they were expressed – that is, in *the process by which people account for their relationships with popular culture*' (Buckingham, 2001, p.274, italics in original). Nevertheless, Buckingham reports that most participants 'defined 'Disney' with reference to the animated feature films' (Buckingham, 2001, p.273), and the transcript excerpts published in his GDAP chapter confirm this preoccupation with animated films.

While Buckingham's study showed that adult audiences are suitable subjects for a discussion about a company whose output is generally considered to cater predominantly to children, it also illustrated how perceptions could be influenced by faulty memories, parental concerns and an imprecise understanding of the WDC. The study showed that audiences can find defining Disney difficult, as demonstrated by 'some confusion among some of the older participants about whether Tom and Jerry, for example, was a Disney creation' (Buckingham, 2001, p.273)[13].

Confusion about what constitutes a Disney film is presumably caused because while Walt Disney did not invent animation, 'one could say that he *defined* it' (Maltin, 1987, p.29, italics in original) and the WDC appears to have subsequently become defined *by* animation. Although Paul Wells points out that 'animation, in some ways, has become synonymous with Disney' (1998, p.3), the Company's original animated shorts actually represented just a few hundred out of 'several thousand sound cartoons [that] were released between 1928 and 1966' (Barrier, 2003, p.xi). Further research is therefore needed into the perception of Disney that is understood and responded to by audiences to determine just how strongly animation influences such opinions.

2.2.2 Disney Audiences: Beyond GDAP

The GDAP research may be the most comprehensive study of Disney's audiences yet in terms of scope, as it attempted to draw initial conclusions about how a range of different Disney media are received by audiences across the world, but it is not the only existing example of Disney audience research. Other scholars have concentrated on specific audiences, with differing agendas, although few have taken the approach of actually consulting a wide range of audiences about their opinions, as the GDAP researchers did.

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[13] Tom and Jerry starred in over 100 animated shorts produced and distributed by MGM from 1940 to 1967, as well as featuring in subsequent television series and feature films. They have never been associated with Disney, and were also absent from the Touchstone film *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988b), which featured cameos from animated characters drawn from Disney, Warner Bros. and other animation studios.

Disney, like other Hollywood film studios, carries out its own market research and screens films for test audiences. When Amy M. Davis made enquiries about accessing this market research data in the late 1990s, former Chief Archivist at Walt Disney Productions Dave Smith informed her that while 'audience polls on the reception of Disney's films […] had, in fact, been conducted, "Unfortunately, after checking with our Legal departments, it seems that the audience poll information is still considered proprietary and confidential, so it is not available to people outside of The Walt Disney Company"' (2006, p.3). No further academic progress has been made in gaining access to Disney's market research data in the decade since Davis' attempt.

A rare and intriguing insight into Disney's market research is to be found in John Taylor's *Storming the Magic Kingdom* (1987), a journalistic account of the 1984 battle for control of the Walt Disney Company. Taylor describes a piece of market research that was carried out for Disney by the polling firm of Yankelovich, Skelly & White in 1983:

> The resulting report established that Walt Disney Productions was the only motion picture studio with name identification: It meant a movie for children. One nineteen-year-old queried in the study said he "wouldn't be caught dead" going to a Disney movie because he would be laughed at by his peers. However, he said, he looked forward to the day when, older and married, he could take his own children to Disney movies. (Taylor, 1987, p.29)

Without access to Disney's own market research and polling data, scholars researching Disney audiences have either had to rely on freely available archives, resort to speculative textual analysis, or generate their own audience data through research, and examples of such audience research are described below.

In *Tinker Belles and Evil Queens* (2000) Sean Griffin explores the relationships between gay and lesbian audiences and Disney. Beginning with the generalised assumption that Disney 'films, TV shows and theme parks are geared mainly towards children, or adults with children' (2000, p.xii), Griffin goes on to carry out a textual analysis of Disney texts from a non-heterosexual viewpoint, as he claims lesbians and gay men have done for years. Griffin notes

that 'the growing awareness of the gay community in recent years by the Walt Disney Company, and a purposeful marketing towards this community, complicates and, at times, challenges the celebratory nature of many reception studies' (2000, p.xxii).

Despite Griffin's claims about Disney's purposeful overtures to LGBT+ audiences, the 2017 Studio Responsibility Index (put together by GLAAD[14] to track representation of LGBT characters in mainstream Hollywood films) awarded Disney a 'Failing' rating for the fourth time in five years, observing that 'Walt Disney Studios has the weakest historical record when it comes to LGBTQ-inclusive films of all the major studios tracked in this report' (GLAAD, 2017). Neither Griffin nor GLAAD engaged non-heterosexual audiences in their analyses, reporting instead from dominant positions as scholar and politically-motivated body respectively, although both draw attention to issues of under-representation of LGBT voices within both Disney's output and audience scholarship.

M. Keith Booker, author of *Disney, Pixar, and the Hidden Messages of Children's Films* (2010) takes an ethnographic approach to the study of Disney, the tone of which can be gauged from the book's provocative title. Booker relies almost exclusively on the opinions of his sons as they watch a variety of loosely-defined children's films together, discovering some 'encouraging gems and disturbing atrocities' (Booker, 2010, p.xx) therein. Booker is concerned with the 'political and ideological messages that are conveyed' (Booker, 2010, p.xx) and takes a Marxist view that such films are responsible for moulding children into the adult consumers of tomorrow. The resultant study is littered with factually incorrect commentary about Disney's activities, and many of the views contained within are drawn from an incredibly small, unforgivably biased sample of his own children.

The difficulty of adult academics studying so-called family or children's films is discussed in the introduction to *In Front of the Children* (Buckingham

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[14] GLAAD (originally Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) is a non-governmental US organisation that monitors and promotes the understanding of equality in the media. The Studio Responsibility Index is compiled by applying the 'Vito Russo Test' to analyse how films portray LGBT characters. More details can be found here: http://www.glaad.org/sri/2015/vitorusso [Accessed: 20 April 2015].

and Bazalgette, 1995). The authors describe the unequal power dynamics between children and adults, which carries through to adult filmmakers and child audiences, noting that 'analysing texts produced for children thus raises fundamental questions about how adults imagine the child audience' (Buckingham and Bazalgette, 1995, p.6). An example of the differences between child and adult reactions to Disney is demonstrated by Booker, who finds the treatment of Dopey in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937c) troubling, but reports that his eleven-year old son 'told me to lighten up' (Booker, 2010, p.4).

While it is possible to speculate about the effects films have on child audiences, it should be noted that 'however patronising or sentimental we may find these images, we need to consider the very different pleasures they may be offering children' (Buckingham and Bazalgette, 1995, p.8)[15]. This consideration is often dismissed in Booker's study in favour of a desire to 'provide children with some of the tools they will need to become resistant readers' (2010, p.186) in adulthood. In his analysis of girls' play and *The Little Mermaid*, Chris Richards admits that his argument necessarily leans heavily on speculation, observing that 'it is not at all easy to get at children's perspectives' (1995, p.149), particularly as children themselves may not necessarily have the linguistic skills to explain their perspectives.

Erica Scharrer and Chyng Feng Sun (2004) take a different approach to their audience research, which used *The Little Mermaid* (1989c) as their primary text. Undergraduate participants were provided with an article that unfavourably compared Disney's animated film with Hans Christian Andersen's original story. They were also given a copy of Andersen's story to read and had the film screened for them, before being invited to engage in classroom discussion. 103 written assignments were obtained from the students, which Scharrer and Sun used to review the students' 'decoding of Disney messages, their responses to the comparison exercise, and – most of all – their resistance to critique of the film' (2004, p.36). Despite Scharrer and Sun's best efforts, the students

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[15] The casual suggestion made by Buckingham and Bazalgette that 'we' as adults may find such films 'patronising or sentimental' is also problematic. For just as children experience different pleasures to those experienced by adult audiences, there will be adults who experience different pleasures to those experienced by the authors.

generally 'did not want to change their attitudes about Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, which has given them intense pleasure and fond memories since they were children' (Scharrer and Sun, 2004, p.51).

These studies suggest that child audiences (and adult audiences who remember the films they saw as children) do not take kindly to criticism of Disney, particularly when such criticism seeks to negate the pleasures that they derive from watching Disney's films. This phenomenon was backed up by the GDAP research, which found that 'the multitude not only favours Disney but also often considers as taboo any serious examination – never mind any criticism – of Disney's meaning and impact' (Wasko and Meehan, 2001, p.331).

Just as Scharrer and Sun used a single film as a case study to investigate Disney audiences, Moya Luckett (1994) has focused on how audiences have responded to Disney's *Fantasia* (1940a) since its original US release, as well as taking into account subsequent re-releases to cinemas in 1954 and on video in 1991. Taking a reception studies approach that considers 'how any interpretation reorients and reworks textual material in the viewers' (or critics') attempts to understand a film' (Luckett, 1994, p.215), Luckett analysed as many reviews, publicity materials and critical evaluations of *Fantasia* as she could access. No public surveys on the films were available to or conducted by Luckett, thus the conclusions drawn were derived from the opinions of critics and media pundits. Such dominant discourse overlooks the varied voices of audiences who are less able to express their views on a privileged platform. With Internet message boards, blogs and social media, it would be easier to locate and analyse some of these overlooked voices today, although by no means all since not everyone has Internet access or the ability/desire to share their opinions online. However, these tools were not available to Luckett at the time she was writing.

The 1940 limited release of *Fantasia* took the form of a roadshow attraction, which employed the innovative use of a new stereo 'Fantasound' format, intended to best show off the classical music that inspired and was married to the film's animated visuals. *Fantasia*'s original release drew largely dismissive responses from music critics who were commentators on the so-called high art to which the film's classical music belonged. However,

enamoured by the nascent popular medium of animation, Luckett found that film critics proclaimed *Fantasia* a masterpiece. While music critics applied the conventions of consuming classical concerts to their interpretations of *Fantasia*, film critics had as frames of reference Disney's Silly Symphonies, a 'series of 75 cartoons beginning with the *The Skeleton Dance* in 1929' (Smith, 2016, p.678) in which the animation was led by the classical and popular music that made up their soundtracks.

The divergent (dominant) discourse about Disney's concert feature 'foregrounds how issues of audience knowledge and perspective are central to a film's reception' (Luckett, 1994, p.220). Amy M. Davis' later review of *Fantasia*'s reception also indicated that 'over time, audiences have come to accept the studio's interpretation and positioning of the movie, as a movie primarily appealing to adults' (2001, p.74). The case study of *Fantasia* demonstrates how an audience's prior knowledge and experience of a film affects the pleasure(s) they derive from it, as well as how Disney can effectively (re)position its films so that audiences respond to them in the ways the WDC wishes (Disney's preferred reading).

Fantasia appeared as a subject of discussion in British public testimonies collected by the Mass Observation survey in 1940s Bolton (Sheridan and Richards, 1987). *Fantasia* – an atypical example of a Disney animated feature – is a particular kind of '*comparative* art form whose credentials make it appropriate to critical interrogation in respect of other aesthetic approaches known to the viewer' (Wells, 1998, p.229, italics in original). Very few Disney films had been released when the Mass Observation survey was carried out, thus it has limited value for discussing the wider oeuvre of Disney film, especially considering the changes in film output that have occurred over the last few decades, from both Disney and Hollywood studios in general.

Paul Wells addresses audiences in the final chapter of his essential work *Understanding Animation* (1998), with a focus on Disney feature films. Writing before the GDAP, Wells' approach aimed to address the lack of attention that had 'been given to the *actual* agendas of the viewing public who attend Disney films' (1998, p.224, italics in original). Drawing on his personal recollection of the terror experienced when seeing the wicked Queen in *Snow White and the*

Seven Dwarfs (1937c) as a child, Wells constructed a survey in which participants were asked 'about their first recollection of watching a Disney film' (1998, p.232). 435 participants aged 15 and above were drawn from several animation festivals, lectures and other animation-focused events to complete the survey.

The resultant data showed that only 5.7% of respondents 'could not remember seeing a Disney film ever, or […] confused the Disney style with that of another animated film – in this sample, chiefly, *Watership Down* (1978b), or remembered a part live-action film like *Mary Poppins* (1964c) or *Pete's Dragon* (1977c)' (Wells, 1998, p.233)[16]. Although the figure is small, Wells' data shows that even audience members who have an interest in animation can find it hard to distinguish between Disney animated films and the animated films of other studios. It is also noteworthy that Wells did not specifically ask his respondents about their first recollections of watching an *animated* Disney film, yet the respondents' answers tended towards animation anyway. Implicit within these responses, as well as in Wells' own comments regarding Disney's part animated live-action films, is the suggestion that Disney is considered to be a synonym for animation by both the viewing public and scholars alike.

Wells used his collated responses to begin to get a better understanding of how audiences respond to animation as a genre. He ultimately concludes in reference to Disney films that 'each person obviously has a specific relationship to the films, some find solace, some find pleasure, some find explanation, some expose deep-rooted fears, but many essentially reconcile tensions between reality and fantasy' (1998, p.242). Wells' work on animated films and their audiences provides valuable insights into adult relationships with Disney films. It may be suggested that the sampling from audiences already interested in animation would create bias in the results, but that does not negate the value of the findings, which point to relationships between audiences and Disney films that were developed further by the larger scale GDAP research, but have since been under-researched.

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[16] Both *Mary Poppins* and *Pete's Dragon* were produced by Disney, while *Watership Down* was produced by Michael Rosen's British Nepenthe Productions and distributed by CIC in the UK, and AVCO Embassy Pictures in the US. See: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0078480/companycredits [Accessed: 10th February 2017].

While Disney has been and continues to be a subject of academic interest, much of the focus on Disney's audiences relates to the WDC as a whole, Disney's mythical 'aura' and apparent values, or the means of audience discourse about Disney and Disney films, rather than the content of this discourse. Scant attention has been paid to Disney's film output as a whole, beyond the understandable but narrow focus on animation. Also missing from the academic corpus is consideration of how audiences understand Disney's output beyond animation, particularly adult audiences, who have lived with Disney films from childhood.

Addressing some of the gaps in the existing Disney literature and treating Disney's film output as a distinct canon will therefore provide a valuable insight into the variety of ways in which adult audiences perceive and respond to Disney films. To consider what approach to take with such audiences, it is important to have an understanding of the field of audience and reception studies. In the following section I thus provide an overview of key academic work in the audience field to identify an appropriate approach for this research.

2.3 Audience & Reception Studies

Reception studies is a valuable field within the study of film that moves beyond textual interpretations to focus on audiences and the ways in which they respond to and understand films. Studying audiences can tell us something about the ways in which we relate to the world around us, 'as well as the way we read the mediated texts that constitute an ever larger part of our horizon of experience' (Gray et al., 2007, p.10).

Janet Staiger takes a historical realist approach to audience research, which she defines as 'researching the history of the interactions between real readers and texts, actual spectators and films' (1992, p.8) rather than textual interpretations. Such an approach includes analysis of dominant readings from contemporary film reviewers and scholars, and marginal readings from public and minority media sources. A mixed approach such as this is ideal to place the reception of texts in context, but it is often much easier to access dominant critical readings than non-dominant readings. With the advent of blogging,

social media and Internet message boards, however, non-dominant readings are more accessible for researchers studying contemporary audiences.

Staiger notes that 'inferences established prior to any specific act of reading are determinants to the perception, comprehension, and interpretation that occurs during reading' (1992, p.20). In other words, an audience's experiences prior to watching a film will influence the ways in which they respond to it. It is therefore not possible to say that a film text can be misread since 'no natural, universally "worthwhile" text exists' (Staiger, 2005, p.3). Audiences understand and derive pleasure from films in a variety of different ways. In her study of television audiences, Ien Ang suggests that 'the experience of pleasure is not rationally motivated' (1989, p.86), and thus audiences often struggle to explain their responses, and one could argue that there is no necessity to do so, except to satisfy the curiosity of researchers.

Reception analysts focus on meaning and the experiences of audiences in their interactions with media texts (Hagen and Wasko, 2000). Reception studies differs from reception analysis by focusing not on *what* a text means but *how* it means something, asking 'what kinds of meanings does a text have? For whom? In what circumstances?' (Staiger, 2005, p.2). Staiger (2000) describes film audiences as perverse spectators, since everyone reads a film differently on the basis of gender identity, nationality, sexuality, age, prior film experiences, and myriad other demographic and lifestyle factors. This is a helpful viewpoint when considering how many authors writing about Disney assume the dominant position of Western, heterosexual viewers in their textual interpretations.

In *Cinema Entertainment* (2009) Alan Lovell and Gianluca Sergi compared the top 50 films at the US box office with the top 50 films voted for by film critics. Their results found a surprisingly eclectic mix of films favoured by the mass audience, as identified by box office revenues, compared with films selected by elite critics that tended to be based on the identity of their directors. Of course, relying on box office revenues alone only gives limited insight into the popularity of films as they do not indicate what pleasures, if any, audiences derived from these films. The authors discuss the nature of entertainment, a term often synonymous with Disney, and used pejoratively by critics to dismiss those texts, particularly blockbusters, enjoyed by the viewing public in large

numbers. This distinction highlights the potential biases involved when relying on dominant audience readings in reception studies.

Mark Glancy (2014) draws on the work of Staiger in his study of British audience responses, which uses contemporaneous surveys, polls and fan magazines to gather data rather than relying on unreliable audience memories. Glancy recognises the limitations of this approach, which relies on dominant readings of engaged film fans, rather than a broader range of the public, although he does draw upon results of the Mass Observation survey that was conducted in Bolton in the 1940s. Using these survey results, Glancy identifies what he terms the 'Snow White taste pattern' (2014, p.35)[17] among British audiences, who preferred films set in an unspecified place and time, with fantastic qualities, spectacular production values and a classical narrative structure, suggesting 'that the success of Hollywood films with British audiences is not related to their American origins' (2014, p.40). Glancy's contextual approach to reception studies supports the conclusions of Lovell and Sergi (2009) by illuminating how audience responses do not necessarily accord with the responses of critics and scholars.

In another study from a British perspective, Thomas Austin's case study of three American releases in the UK sought to establish the 'triangulation between film texts, contexts and audiences' (2002, p.2). Austin reviewed how the films' marketing and UK press coverage contextualised and commodified the adult thrillers[18] *Dracula* (1992d), *Basic Instinct* (1992b), and *Natural Born Killers* (1994c) for potential British audiences. The study showed that 'there are both continuities and differences in the ways a film is framed by the procedures of the film industry, by the media, and among audiences' (Austin, 2002, p.6). Austin's approach – drawing film industry activities, press reports and audience responses together – provides a helpful model for considering ways in which to research Disney's adult audiences.

Staying with British audience research a little longer, since my own research will be conducted from this perspective and context, the most

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[17] The taste pattern is of course named for Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937c).
[18] The films can be identified as adult thrillers by the 18 certificates granted to them by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC).

comprehensive study of British audiences to date was a longitudinal study conducted in 1987. The authors of this research combined the results of historic audience surveys with questionnaires of their own devising to convincingly argue that the decline in cinema-going audiences in the UK since the peaks of the 1940s reflected 'shifts in the social process and technology' (Docherty et al., 1987, p.80). This argument runs counter to the prevailing assumption that television, and then video, killed the cinema audience simply by existing as an alternative medium. The research concluded that 'whatever the technology which delivers feature films, the British public will continue to devour films with pleasure, discrimination and interest' (Docherty et al., 1987, p.120). These results suggest that the British public therefore forms an excellent data source on which the present research can draw.

Another key finding from the 1987 study was that 'watching an entertainment film and gaining pleasure from it is primarily a home-based experience' (Docherty et al., 1987, p.37) for most film fans. The research was conducted in the early days of home video, yet today the popularity of film streaming services such as Netflix and Sky Movies (and the nascent DisneyLife service available to UK subscribers), plus the declining but significant physical home media market, alongside the fact that 'since the early 2000s [cinema] admissions have been fairly flat' (BFI, 2015, p.5), all point to film viewing as still very much a home-based experience. An audience study focused solely on cinema audiences would be unrepresentative of the broad range of film-viewing experiences available, particularly to British audiences, thus the various non-cinematic film watching options need to be captured in the present research.

Martin Barker has observed that 'film analysis is capable of revealing the conditions under which a film can involve and be important to an audience' (2000, p.175), but he also recognises that such textual analysis and interpretation does not tell the whole story. Regarding the Disney oeuvre, Barker notes that the tendency in academia to 'either deconstruct the Disney corpus for its ideological operations […] or undertake the difficult task […] of looking at why and how people *enjoy* Disney films, theme parks, merchandising, etc.' (Barker, 2000, p.189) sets the two approaches in opposition – yet they can be more effective when combined into a holistic approach.

In 2003-2004, Barker and his fellow researchers embarked on the ambitious *Lord of the Rings* project, which 'represented the largest and most complex attempt to date to study audience responses to a film' (Barker et al., 2007, p.1). The project resulted in almost 25,000 responses, gathered through a multi-language questionnaire – encompassing both qualitative and quantitative questions – and a series of follow-up interviews (Barker, 2009, p.376). This vast quantity of data allowed the researchers to draw robust conclusions about how the film trilogy affected audiences in terms of the fantasy film genre, the international nature of the source material and production, and how national contexts affected the films' reception. While the project does not relate directly to the present research's attempts to assess the effects of a genre on Disney's whole oeuvre (as opposed to a single film series) Barker's later observation is particularly instructive when he notes that 'our findings […] appear to invite a whole new approach, in which *through carefully structured audience research* it may be possible to derive a range of competing accounts of what the 'text' is' (2009, p.386, italics in original). Through carefully structured audience research, I intend to derive at least two competing accounts of what the Disney genre is.

The overview of audience and reception studies described in this section highlights the value of canvassing the views of audiences in drawing conclusions about their film viewing habits and pleasures. It is not enough to speculate from the dominant position of a single academic researcher about what audiences do and do not think and how they behave. For audience studies to be effective, a large data set is required to draw broad and generalisable conclusions. Previous Disney audience studies have shown how audiences come into contact with Disney films with great frequency, but have not tried to determine whether the Disney films that audiences perceive and discuss match the films that constitute Disney's tangible output.

The Disney films perceived by audiences and the films released by Disney can both be said to make up a Disney genre or genres, and to understand how the Disney genre(s) are formed requires an appreciation of the field of genre studies – an overview of the field follows in the next section.

2.4 Genre Studies

The study and identification of film genres began in the 1940s and 1950s, 'starting with the western and the gangster film and followed by other classic genres such as film noir, the musical, and the woman's picture' (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012, p.195). These 'classic genres' emerged during Hollywood's studio system when, 'in the gradual development of the business of movie production, experimentation steadily gave way to standardization as a matter of fundamental economics' (Schatz, 1981, p.4). The classic genres, which used to be identifiable with specific studios (MGM musicals, Universal horror, and Warner Bros gangster films, for example) are still studied (and debated) by scholars today, and genres such as comedy, horror and science fiction are recognised by both filmmakers and film audiences.

In *Hollywood Genres* (1981) Thomas Schatz examines genre films as part of the studio system, noting that in New Hollywood (from the late 1960s/1970s) the studios functioned 'primarily as distribution companies' (p.4) rather than producers. Therefore the classical era's association of studios with particular genres was no longer relevant. As is common in genre studies work, animation, family and children's films are notably absent from Schatz's discussion, and therefore Disney is overlooked, although at the time it was a small, independent studio releasing a handful of films a year alongside more prolific Hollywood giants.

Schatz identifies 'a level of *active but indirect audience participation* in the formulation of any popular commercial form' (1981, p.12, italics in original) such as a film genre. This means that audiences tend to vote with their feet in the construction of genres, as studios try and replicate box office successes by developing formulas that evolve into genres. Schatz also identifies the use of journeyman directors in genre filmmaking, which ensured standardisation and kept the auteur at bay. The same could be said of Disney films, which regularly employed the same in-house directors who adhered to the Disney filmmaking style right up until the 1980s. Although Schatz voices concerns about whether his definitions of genre are appropriate to New Hollywood, his observation that 'all of Hollywood's genres have been refined through the studios' cooperation with the mass audience, and all exhibit basic similarities of social function and

narrative composition' (1981, p.261) rings true for the way that Disney films have developed, and will be a useful touchstone in considering how the Disney genres have formed.

Writing almost two decades later, in *Genre and Hollywood* (1999) Steve Neale observes that 'genres for Schatz are closed and continuous rather [than] open and intermittent systems' (p.211) that allow cross-pollination of genres or genre hybrids such as romantic comedies to form. Neale criticises Schatz for minimising the impact of real world events on genres, such as changes in production methods and social and cultural events that occurred continuously alongside the evolution of genres. Instead, Neale views genres as 'ubiquitous, multifaceted phenomena rather than […] one-dimensional entities to be found only within the realms of Hollywood cinema or of commercial popular cinema' (1999, p.28).

Neale identifies thirteen generic film categories, none of which includes family films or animation, and Disney films are once again noticeably absent from discussion. Usefully, Neale does note that 'the expectations triggered by the name of a star or director are as generic as those triggered by terms like 'western', 'thriller' or 'horror film'' (1999, p.26) thus it would be expected that the name of a producer, Walt Disney, and his studio could also be said to trigger generic expectations. Hollywood's intertextual relay of publicity, promotion and reception of films is identified by Neale as an important element in the construction of genre.

In the edited collection *Genre and Contemporary Hollywood* (Neale, 2002a), Neale observes that 'the terms 'trend' and 'production trend' have in recent years figured prominently as alternatives to 'genre' as means by which to chart the different strands in Hollywood's output' (2002b, p.4). One of the production trends identified by Tino Balio in his examination of Hollywood in the 1990s is animation, and Disney is finally brought into the realm of genre studies. Balio discovered that although Disney was 'the most profitable company in the business [of animation] […] not even Disney, whose name was synonymous with the animated/family film, had a lock on the production trend' (2002, p.181). Here Disney is considered only in terms of animation, while animation as a genre seems to be synonymous with the family film genre.

In the same collection, Peter Krämer suggests that children and family films are neglected by genre literature because they are so diverse in nature and 'therefore resist the systematic analysis of iconography, narrative patterns and thematic concerns underpinning much of genre studies' (2002, p.186). He also ascribes this neglect to a perception that family films are cheaply made, commercially unimportant and just not very good. However, he argues that science fiction films *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982a) and the original Star Wars saga (1977-1983) are in fact examples of the children's film genre, noting that contemporary reviewers often highlighted their suitability for children and made comparisons with Disney films that were not always appreciated by these films' producers.

Krämer notes that Disney 'managed the rare feat of having its brand name become largely synonymous with the product categories to which its output belonged' (2002, p.188) but stops short of defining Disney as a discrete film genre. He goes on to suggest that comparisons and 'references to Disney and to children's films were double-edged [as the implication of such labels] indicated that the films in question might be unsuitable for teenagers and adults, and therefore of only limited commercial appeal' (2002, p.190). Similarly, once the Production Code that policed Hollywood film content was abolished in 1966 and film ratings were introduced, instead of denoting films suitable for general audiences, the G certificate came to mark out such films as unfit for adult consumption.

Although Krämer says that 'the Disney company failed to break out of the children's ghetto' (2002, p.193), even after including PG rated films in their output, he observes that children's and family films were rehabilitated towards the end of the twentieth century. Krämer reasons that this is because 'the majority of the most popular and most profitable films and multimedia franchises are primarily (but not exclusively) 'kids' stuff'' (2002, p.196), and the same holds true over a decade later.

Mark Jancovich returns to the audience's role in the creation of genre, suggesting that since there is no single prescribed reading of a film, it is also difficult, if not impossible, to provide a single definition of a particular genre. Jancovich takes issue with Rick Altman's attitude to audiences in the creation of

genre in *Film/Genre* (1999), noting that 'he does not pay enough attention to the ways in which film audiences themselves can become involved in policing the boundaries of film genres' (Jancovich, 2002, p.471). Discussing the horror genre and the way it is perceived and talked about among audiences and horror fans, Jancovich notes that 'when people talk about their cultural consumption, they do so in the knowledge that what they say classifies them in the eyes of others' (2002, p.478), a concept that may prove pertinent to the ways in which audiences talk about Disney films.

Jancovich sounds a note of warning about 'the tendency to authorise, and present as more authentic, the tastes and definitions of fans, [highlighting the] need to study and understand the ways in which other sections of the viewing public consume films' (2002, pp.478-479). It is therefore not just important to consider audiences in the construction of film genres, but the different tastes of audiences, from fans of a genre to detractors. To understand a film genre it is as imperative to know why some audiences 'see it as 'not for the likes of us', as it is […] to understand why fans do see it as 'their sort of thing'' (Jancovich, 2002, p.479).

This overview of key discussions in the field of genre studies highlights the importance of including audiences in the construction of genre, but it is also necessary to ground considerations of genre 'in the film industry and in history more generally' (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012, p.196). The formation of a genre is not necessarily an either/or proposition, either constructed by audiences or defined by the grammar of filmmaking, but can be a mixture of both. In the case of the hypothesised Disney genre(s) it will be instructive to compare the genres constructed by both filmmakers and audiences, and then to compare the two. This notion will be discussed further in the next chapter.

2.5 Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter has covered relevant literature from the field of Disney Studies, particularly as it pertains to Disney audiences, as well as an overview of the audiences and reception studies field, and the field of genre studies. None of the previous academic literature has, as far as I can determine,

been concerned with the idea of a Disney film genre. Instead, Disney films are talked about by those in Disney Studies and outside of it as if they have already been defined, as animated children's films. In the discussion of genre studies, the implications of the label 'children's films' were seen to be potentially detrimental to such films gaining respect and audiences.

Janet Wasko's work on Disney in 2001 covered a lot of ground in attempting to both describe Disney's entertainment output as a whole, beyond a preoccupation with (animated) films, and beginning to consider how international audiences experience Disney, through the Global Disney Audiences Project. By trying to encompass the wider Disney media empire in one project, some detail was missed. Wasko quite rightly stated that 'if we are to fully understand the Disney phenomenon, the reception or consumption of Disney products also needs to be taken into account' (2001c, p.152), but I do not believe that we can fully understand the Disney phenomenon without first understanding what a Disney film or genre is, and to further this understanding a turn to their film output is necessary since the majority of other Disney media and products find their roots in the films.

My research will address the gaps that have been identified in the existing Disney Studies research, and will draw upon existing work from the fields of reception studies and genre studies to define the Disney genre. In the next chapter I will introduce my research questions, which build on the literature reviewed here, and I will also provide an operational definition of 'Disney film', as well as placing Disney films in a historical context.

Chapter 3
Research Questions, Definitions & Context

In this chapter I first present the three research questions that the gaps in the existing literature (discussed in Chapter 2) and my own experiences have inspired. I then explain the operational definition of the term 'Disney film' that has been employed to set the scope of this research. Finally, I locate the concept of Disney films in several contexts: within the wider Walt Disney Company (WDC); in the Hollywood studio system; and as part of the so-called family film genre.

3.1 Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to answer the question of how adult audiences negotiate and renegotiate their relationships with films produced by the WDC's film studios. Audiences' relationships with Disney films inevitably develop as children mature emotionally and intellectually into adulthood, but such relationships are likely to undergo renegotiation because audience perceptions of Disney films are also subject to change. Audience perceptions of Disney films do not necessarily accord with the tangible film output of Walt Disney Studios. Thus adult relationships with Disney films are entwined in the differences and similarities between the tangible and the fantasy perceptions of Disney films, or the Disney film genre(s).

Disney has not previously been defined as a discrete film genre, although it has been identified as a concept or aura with particular significance in global (children's) culture (Wasko, 2001c). As elaborated further below, I believe that there are in fact two Disney film genres, which I intend to identify and define through this research. The first genre is drawn from an analysis of Disney's tangible film output, and I am thus describing it as the Tangible Disney Genre (TDG). The second genre is drawn from the perceptions of audiences and relates to an imaginary or fantasy concept of Disney that is informed by

experiences beyond Disney's tangible film output – I have dubbed this the Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG).

Where the TDG and FDG differ – where reality meets and diverges with fantasy – there is the potential for tensions to form in the relationships that audiences have with Disney films, especially as audiences move from childhood to adulthood. An analysis of the differences and similarities between the two Disney genres is therefore a useful tool for understanding how and why adult audiences renegotiate their relationships with Disney films.

Three research questions (RQs) have been formulated to address the TDG, FDG and a comparison of the two genres. These questions are presented in Table 1, and further expanded upon in the sections that follow.

#	Research Question and Purpose	Chapter
RQ1	**What exactly is a Disney film?** Defining the TDG	5
RQ2	**How do adults perceive Disney films?** Defining the FDG	6
RQ3	**How do adult audiences (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films?** Comparing the TDG and FDG	7

Table 1: Research questions

RQ1: What exactly is a Disney film?

Disney films, as produced by Walt Disney Studios (WDS) and its subsidiaries, are a part of the wider Walt Disney Company (WDC) brand, which as Janet Wasko suggests 'still represents the entertainment brand that is associated most closely with young people and families, having built a strong and enduring relationship that is almost 'naturally' associated with children' (2008, p.467). Mike Budd has described the combined effect of Disney's many media

interests, encompassing film, TV, theme parks, toys, video games, and much more, as 'the Disney aura' (2005, p.1).

The films produced by WDS can be viewed as a discrete strand of the Disney aura, as part of their own Disney film genre, which is connected with, but separate from, the broader Disney brand or aura. Disney films have become such a ubiquitous part of cinema that a perception and understanding of what constitutes such a film is shared across audiences of diverse generations and cultures. This shared understanding means that audiences instinctively know what a Disney film is without necessarily recognising Disney as a genre.

Previous research (see section 2.2) concerning Disney has shown the implicit, occasionally explicit, assumptions that are made by both audiences and academics about what a Disney film is, with particular emphases on animation and children's films. The purpose of RQ1 is therefore to challenge these persistent assumptions and to finally provide a definition of the Disney film genre based on Disney's tangible film output.

To understand the Disney film genre, we need to know how to define a film genre. The discipline of genre studies forms a discrete sub-section of film and media studies, and there are several competing definitions of genre (see Schatz, 1981, Neale, 1999, Neale, 2002a, Grant, 2003). *A Dictionary of Film Studies* (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012, p.194) summarises the following definitions of genre:

1. Shared characteristics of film form, film style, iconography, or content (textual focus);
2. Film industry practices of production and marketing (industry focus);
3. Audience expectations and responses (reception focus).

Thomas Schatz agrees with the third definition, suggesting that films 'are made by filmmakers, whereas genres are "made" by the collective response of the mass audience' (1981, p.264). However, I argue that there are at least two Disney genres, and that they exist in parallel.

Answering RQ1 (what exactly is a Disney film?) will allow me to define the first Disney genre, which I am calling the Tangible Disney Genre (TDG). The TDG is comprised of elements drawn from all of the Disney films released to

date, and thus aligns with the first definition of genre given by Kuhn and Westwell above. The TDG refers to Disney films in actuality, being based on all of the films that have been produced by the WDS over the last 80 years, from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937c) to *Beauty and the Beast* (2017a) and everything in between.

WDS has produced several hundred feature films since 1937, encompassing animation and live-action, fiction and documentary, sci-fi and musicals, cinema and television, blockbuster and independents, and many other genres, formats and styles. For several decades, from the 1930s to the 1980s, Disney was a small but consistent independent player within the Hollywood system, releasing a handful of films every year, but today the Disney media conglomerate has grown to dominate the global box office with recently acquired studios (Pixar, Marvel, and Lucasfilm) producing films distributed by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures (WDSMP).

Defining precisely what constitutes the Tangible Disney Genre is not a straightforward process because the TDG has changed, and continues to evolve, as Disney creates, acquires and retires its various film studios. Defining the TDG is not an impossible task however. To date, whenever Disney films are discussed, there is a tendency to focus on so-called 'Classic Disney', defined by Wasko as encompassing 'the company's animated films, cartoons, and some live-action films' (2001c, p.110), ignoring the wider context of Disney films.

Wasko also observes that it is 'also possible to refer to these products and characters collectively because they generally include a specific style, a standard formula of story and characters, as well as a set of common themes and values' (2001c, p.110). However, the concept of Classic Disney is more difficult to define than Wasko asserts, especially since the WDC itself employs the term 'Classic Disney' (or Disney Classics) to describe and distinguish its most significant animated films from others. There is also a question as to whether Classic Disney refers merely to animation, or perhaps only to films produced and overseen by Walt Disney prior to his death in 1966.

By asking what exactly a Disney film is, I intend to challenge the intangible concept of Classic Disney, as well as the tendency to favour

animation, that has been commonly ascribed to Disney's cinematic output. Through a comprehensive, systematic survey of Disney's film output, I will examine both the commonalities shared by the majority of Disney's films as well as the anomalies, thus allowing me to define the TDG.

RQ2: How do adults perceive Disney films?

Once the TDG has been established, attention shifts to the second Disney film genre. As per the third definition of genre provided by *A Dictionary of Film Studies* listed above, Steve Neale also puts audiences at the centre of genre creation, believing that genres consist of 'specific systems of expectation and hypothesis which spectators bring with them to the cinema and which interact with films themselves during the course of the viewing process' (1999, p.31). It is within this system of audience expectation and hypothesis that the second Disney genre lies.

As this audience-generated genre is less tethered to the historical reality of the actual films produced by the WDS I am calling this second genre, based on an imaginary version of Disney, the Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG)[19]. The FDG is influenced by the wider WDC brand, by the WDS films and non-WDS films that audiences have been exposed to, and also by audiences' individual beliefs and experiences on a more general level, beyond Disney.

While children clearly form a primary market for Disney, it would be disingenuous to suggest that the audiences who watch Disney films are only made up of children. There can be no denying that adults constitute a large portion of Disney's audience, particularly considering their association with family viewing, where *family* is commonly code for (heterosexual adult) parents and their children. There are also many adults who have no interest in Disney films, or who take an active dislike towards the company and everything it does. Yet although the idea of Disney (as a genre, a brand, or a company) evokes strong opinions from audiences, both positive and negative, 'the role of fandom

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[19] The term 'fantasy' has been chosen instead of 'imaginary' because it has greater resonance with Disney entertainment.

and allergy in the production, circulation and reception of genres in the cinema remains relatively unexplored' (Neale, 1999, p.230n)[20].

It is useful to consider the 'audience archetypes' that Janet Wasko uses to describe Disney audiences[21] (2001c, p.196). These archetypes, which Wasko based on her own observations and a survey of previous Disney audience studies, range from fanatics to antagonists, and attempt to encompass the wide variety of responses that audiences have to the Disney brand. Wasko acknowledges that these audience 'designations may not apply as neatly with children, as most seem highly enthusiastic about Disney' (2001c, p.195), thus admitting that adult audiences have more varied and nuanced relationships with the Disney brand than children do.

It therefore becomes clear that speaking to adult audiences about their perceptions of Disney films will allow for a more nuanced and diverse consideration of what makes up the FDG. Focusing on the adult audiences for Disney films will also address gaps in existing audience research, which has predominantly been concerned with children's relationships with animated Disney films (see Haddock et al., 2003, Drotner, 2004, Booker, 2010, Coyne et al., 2016).

As noted earlier, the Tangible Disney Genre is liable to change as the film output of the WDS changes, thus it might be expected that the FDG will change too. The concept of the FDG is much more intangible, and less easy to define, but as with the TDG, it will be possible to detect commonalities across audience understandings of the FDG, as well as to identify anomalies and tensions. Of course it will not be possible to characterise the understandings of all adult audiences, but the presumably Western audiences involved in the research will allow me to make observations about some of Disney's largest English-language markets.

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[20] While genre creation still remains relatively underdeveloped, the discipline of Fan Studies continues to make strides in the analysis of popular media audiences and fandom.

[21] The Disney audiences being discussed by Wasko in these archetypes are audiences of the wider Disney brand, rather than film audiences specifically.

RQ3: How do adult audiences (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films?

Establishing the components that make up the Tangible and Fantasy Disney Genres through RQ1 and RQ2 leads directly to the primary research question, RQ3, which compares the two genres. These genres will therefore be used as tools to understand how adult audiences negotiate and renegotiate their relationships with Disney films. A subsidiary outcome will include insight into the formation of film genres, but the key outcome concerns an articulation of the pleasures provided by Disney films for adult audiences and the ways in which these pleasures (or lack thereof) are (re)negotiated.

Adult audiences' perceptions of the FDG will expectedly influence their relationships with Disney films. The term 'relationship' here refers to how audiences choose to interact with Disney films, whether they watch voluntarily, or choose to buy into the wider world of Disney film merchandise, for example, as well as how audiences feel about this interaction. These relationships are open to change, especially as audiences move from childhood through their teenage years and into adulthood, maturing emotionally and intellectually, and developing their tastes through new experiences.

The relationships that adults have with Disney films will be affected by a number of different influences, including: parenthood; access and exposure to a wider range of films; their sexuality, gender, race; and other demographic, cultural and geographic factors. The way that these changes and experiences influence audiences will result in constant renegotiations of their relationships with Disney films, or more accurately Disney films as represented by the FDG, on an emotional or cultural level.

As a theoretical example of such renegotiation, a child who grew up taking pleasure from the colours and characters of *Aladdin* (1992a) might learn to better appreciate the film's songs as they grow older and become more interested in music. At university they might learn about racist portrayals of Arabs in the film and thus develop a distaste for it, or they might perhaps still enjoy it, but with a feeling of guilt. Later they may choose to withhold the film from their own children or they may look forward to sharing it with them, or to

relive nostalgic experiences with their friends. Each occasion that *Aladdin* is encountered by the audience member therefore invites a renegotiation of their relationship with the film as an example of a Disney film and as a representative of the FDG.

Any renegotiation between audience and film that takes place will depend upon the audience's understanding of the FDG and the TDG in the form of the films that Disney releases. By considering what exactly a Disney film is and defining the TDG, and then investigating audience perceptions and understandings of the FDG, I will finally be able to compare the two to gain a better understanding of the ways in which adults renegotiate their relationships with Disney films. It should then be possible to extend this understanding to adult relationships with children's and family media on a wider basis, beyond Disney.

These research questions will allow me to describe an explicit definition of the Disney film genre based on tangible Disney film output, whereas previously such a genre has been implicit and informed by shared assumption. I will also be able to identify the Disney film genre understood by general adult audiences, and to subsequently compare the two genres (TDG and FDG) to conclude how reality and perception intersect and diverge in terms of film genre, and the implications that this may have on both audience experiences and studio output.

3.2 An Operational Definition of 'Disney Film'

While the meaning of a tangible Disney film genre is something that my first research question will establish, an operational definition (Berger, 2000, p.177) of a 'Disney film' is necessary to identify the films that will be analysed, and thus the scope of RQ1. Without an operational definition I would be unable to satisfactorily answer the research questions laid out above, and the reader would be confused about the scope and focus of the analysis as it relates to Disney's output.

Figure 2: Steps taken to define a 'Disney film'

Key:

1) Feature films are defined by running times of 40 minutes or longer.
2) Only films released theatrically are included.
3) Only features released in the US that feature original content are included.
4) Only features distributed and/or produced in the US using the Disney name are included.
   Distribution: Walt **Disney** Studios Motion Pictures (WDSMP).
   Production: Walt **Disney** Productions/Pictures (WDP), and **Disney**nature.
   E.g. if distributed by Buena Vista Pictures Distribution (BVPD), film is only included if produced by W**D**P, **Disney**nature or **Disney**-Pixar.
5) Subsidiary Studios of Walt Disney Studios, past and present.
   (See Appendix 1b for more detail).
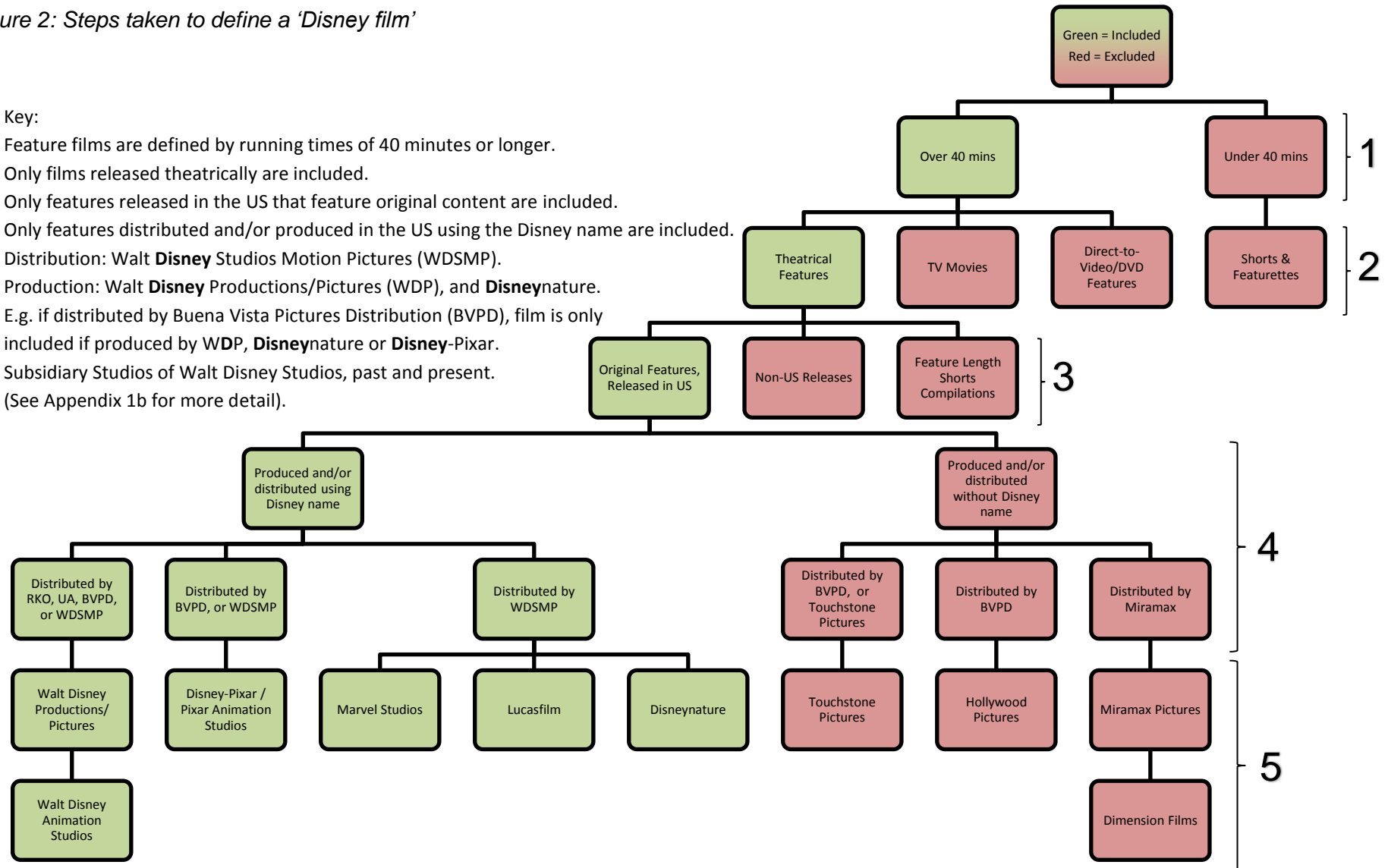
In this section I will therefore guide the reader through the choices made to define the concept of a Disney film. Figure 2 on page 47 illustrates the steps that were followed to define a Disney film, and the following discussion expands upon this process, with explanations and supporting evidence for the choices made.

3.2.1 Length

Walt Disney begin his career in Hollywood producing animated shorts (commonly known as cartoons) for theatrical exhibition, over 250 of which were released prior to Disney's first feature film in 1937. These shorts were typically around 8 minutes in length and starred Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, Mickey Mouse, and a host of different characters in the Silly Symphony series. Disney's regular annual production of ten or more shorts (both animated and live-action) continued into the late 1950s, when 'it became common for film exhibition to consist of a single feature film' (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012, p.372). Unlike most other Hollywood studios, Disney does still release animated shorts today – most Pixar films (and the occasional WDP/WDAS film) are preceded on their theatrical release with a cartoon – although often these have their premiere on home media or television.

Disney has released over 1,000 short subjects, both live-action and animated, and some of these have produced enduring stars (Mickey, Minnie, Donald, Goofy and Pluto) who populate theme parks, television series and merchandise. Many shorts have had less impact on audiences beyond Disney fan/atics, not least because many of the shorts can be difficult to find on home media (though not as difficult on YouTube). I would speculate that there are probably more people wearing Mickey Mouse t-shirts today than have seen (or be able to name) even the most famous Disney shorts, such as *Steamboat Willie* (1928).

Feature films have been defined by major film institutions 'the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the American Film Institute, and the British Film Institute […] as having a running time of 40 minutes or longer' (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012, p.155). However, *Disney A to Z: The Official Encyclopedia*

(Smith, 2016) defines a feature film as a 'full-length film, live-action or animated, normally over sixty minutes in length' (p.268), although an exception is noted in the encyclopaedia entry regarding *Saludos Amigos* (1942b), at 42 minutes. Three further features under 60 minutes in length also appear on the encyclopaedia's list of Disney films[22]. For the purposes of the present operational definition, 40 minutes will be considered as the minimum length of a Disney feature film.

3.2.2 Exhibition

The *Oxford Dictionary of Film Studies* (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012) defines a feature film as 'a full-length film intended for *theatrical exhibition*, usually as the main item of a *cinema* programme' (p.155, my emphasis). This definition's repeated reference to a feature film's (initial) mode of exhibition excludes films made for television and home media markets – Disney has made many films for both.

The first Disney film to be aired on television (in truncated form) was *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) in 1964, on the second episode of the *Disneyland* (1954-1958) anthology series. Episodes of this hour-long anthology series and its successors aired behind-the-scenes looks at new Disney films, previously released theatrical shorts and films, and made for television mini-series. When the series became *Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color* (1961-1969) it began airing two- and three-part dramas that were sometimes subsequently released as feature films on home media or theatrically outside the US. In 1977 Disney produced their first two hour television film to air in full, *The Ghost of Cypress Swamp* (1977a), and since then has produced over 200 such TV movies. When the anthology series finally ended in 1991, original films continued to receive their premieres on the Disney Channel[23].

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[22] The three other films under 60 minutes are: *The Young Black Stallion* (2003h), 50 mins; *Sacred Planet* (2004f), 47 mins; and *Roving Mars* (2006d) at a just-about-feature-length 40 mins. All of these films were released in the IMAX format.

[23] Disney Channel's TV movies aired under the designation of Disney Channel Premiere Films (1983-1996) and later Disney Channel Original Movies (1997-present).

Disney's television films have received little attention from academics and non-academic writers alike, and this disregard for the medium is in keeping with academia's lack of interest in television films more generally. Alvin H. Marill's reference work *Movies Made For Television, 1964-2004* (2005) contains over 2,000 pages of films that have been overlooked by scholars; unfortunately I am also going to make this omission. Television movies do not reach the same audiences, or generally have the same cultural impact and recognition as theatrical releases, with their attendant celebrity premieres, merchandising and box office returns. They are often less accessible too, confined to Disney's subscription cable channels, and with less availability on home media and streaming channels compared to theatrical features[24].

Direct-to-video releases as a genre have not been afforded academic attention either – they do not even have their own reference book. Disney's first direct-to-video title was *Where the Toys Come From* (1984c), but they did not fully exploit the medium until a decade later when *The Return of Jafar* (1994d), a sequel to the popular theatrical feature *Aladdin* (1992a), began a series of animated spin-offs to Disney's theatrical animated features. Together with a handful of live-action spin-offs and several original animated and live-action films, Disney has produced around 80 films that have debuted on video or DVD. *Super Buddies* (2013h) was the last feature-length direct-to-DVD film released by Disney to date, possibly reflecting a move away from physical home media by both Disney and audiences, as well as the cancellation of the animated sequels line by John Lasseter when he became chief creative officer of Walt Disney Animation Studios in 2006, following criticisms of the quality of such films.

The definition of Disney films used in this research therefore only relates to theatrically released feature films, and does not include television movies and those made directly for video and DVD markets. Such films are important as part of Disney's wider entertainment output, but their inclusion here would widen

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[24] An exception would be the *High School Musical* franchise (2006-present). The first two films produced for Disney Channel were huge successes, leading to a third film being released theatrically, as well as an American arena tour by the cast, international stage shows, and a wide range of merchandise. Four international versions have been produced (in China, Mexico, Brazil and Argentina), and a fourth US TV instalment is due to air in late 2017/early 2018.

the scope of the enquiry too broadly. A study dedicated to these alternative forms of film would fill a gap in present Disney scholarship, but will not form a part of the current research.

3.2.3 Distribution & Content

The venue in which a feature film is initially delivered to audiences is an important part of the Disney films definition, and so is the geographical location. Although it has offices around the world, the WDC is an American company – some might say *the* American company – and as such the US is the primary market for its feature films (even though overseas revenues can often dwarf domestic box office returns – see Figure 16 in section 5.7).

In the US Disney distributes its films through Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures (WDSMP), formerly Buena Vista Pictures Distribution (BVPD), which began life under the name Buena Vista Distribution Company in 1953 when Disney's then-distributor, RKO, balked at releasing a feature-length True-Life Adventure documentary. As a result, *The Living Desert* (1953a) and every subsequent WDS theatrical feature and short was released through Disney's own distribution company in the US.

Disney's 2016 Annual Financial Report (AFR) notes that 'in most major international markets, we distribute our filmed products directly while in other markets our films are distributed by independent distribution companies or joint ventures' (Walt Disney Company, 2017, p.12), thus what may be considered a Disney film in the US may not necessarily be released as a Disney film in the UK, without the familiar Disney logo on the poster[25].

As noted in the previous section, Disney has also released feature films overseas that have been edited together from episodes of its anthology television series, and there have also been numerous feature-length compilations of animated shorts released in Europe, Japan and beyond that

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[25] A recent example is *The BFG* (2016a). The film was produced by Walt Disney Pictures and DreamWorks (among others) and distributed by WDSMP in the US and Walt Disney Studios Japan in Japan, but by Entertainment One in the UK, Canada and Australia; Columbia Pictures in the Philippines; and TriPictures in Spain. See: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3691740/companycredits?ref_=tt_ql_dt_5 [Accessed: 13 March 2017].

have never received domestic US releases. Data on such foreign releases can be rather sparse, thus in order to rationalise the numbers of films under consideration, and to ensure enough comparative data is available, only films released theatrically in the US by WDSMP and its predecessors[26] will be included in the scope of this research. Where a Disney-produced film has premiered outside the US, but later had a US theatrical release, it will be included, no matter how limited the US theatrical release might have been.

Omitted from this Disney film definition are those films produced by Studio Ghibli, the Japanese animation studio. Several of Studio Ghibli's animated films have had their American dubs overseen by Disney, as well as receiving US theatrical and video releases by Disney's distributors. Rather than having any production input from Disney, Disney has held Studio Ghibli's North American film distribution rights, although at time of writing, Disney only holds the US home media rights for Studio Ghibli films; the theatrical rights now reside with the GKids distribution company (Marechal, 2011).

Films included are also restricted to those that have either been purposefully produced for theatrical exhibition, or the handful of theatrical releases that have been edited together from existing shorts or television shows, sometimes with original content, to produce new features. These films are distinct from those that merely bundle several shorts together with little regard to the overall form of the feature. Films edited from existing content that are included in the present consideration of Disney films all appear on the Disney film list published in *Disney A to Z: The Official Encyclopedia* (Smith, 2016).

3.2.4 Studios

According to the WDC 2016 AFR, 'cumulatively through October 1, 2016 the Company has released domestically [in the US] approximately 1,000 full-length features and 100 full-length animated features' (Walt Disney Company, 2017, p.13). The AFR also lists '1,400 active produced and acquired titles, including

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[26] Including those Walt Disney Productions films distributed by RKO and United Artists prior to the creation of Disney's own distributor, Buena Vista Distribution Company, in 1953.

1,000 live-action titles and 400 animated titles, in the domestic [US] home entertainment marketplace' (Walt Disney Company, 2017, p.13), although some of these 'titles' may include television series and movies, shorts compilations and direct-to-video releases. These figures show that the WDC has been responsible for producing a very large number of films.

On the website of D23, the official Disney fan club (of which I am a member), there are 717 entries in what is claimed to be 'a complete list of Disney films' (Disney, n/d) up to the end of 2016[27]. This list seems to indicate that those films produced by WDP are the norm, as films produced by Touchstone, Hollywood Pictures, Marvel, Lucasfilm and Disneynature are clearly identified as such (Pixar films appear on the list but are not labelled any differently). There are two anomalous Miramax releases on the list, but no others. Comparing D23's 717 films with the 1,100 mentioned in the 2016 AFR, there is a difference of 383 films – this difference may indicate the number of films released by Miramax and Dimension when they were part of the WDS (1993-2010)[28].

It would make sense that the D23 list of Disney films excludes those produced by Miramax and Dimension since they were also distributed by Miramax and not by Disney's own distribution companies, BVPD and WDSMP. Disney's purchase of Miramax fit a broader Hollywood tendency in the 1990s 'to annex or co-opt successful formulae and filmmakers from the independent film sector' (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012, p.227). When Disney bought Miramax Films, it gained 'the rights to its library of more than 200 films [and as] part of the deal, Disney financed future Miramax productions' (Smith, 2016, p.510), but Miramax founders Harvey and Bob Weinstein continued to run it like an independent studio, until they left in 2005. With no clear links between the Disney name and Miramax/Dimension for audiences unversed in Hollywood business dealings, it would be a stretch to refer to either studio's releases as 'Disney films'.

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[27] A list of 715 feature films also appears in the Fifth Edition of Dave Smith's *Disney A to Z: The Official Encyclopedia* (2016). All encyclopaedia entries are accessible to D23 members through the D23 website.
[28] Research into Disney's film output that I had carried out prior to commencing the present study indicates that, while part of the WDS, Miramax released approximately 345 films, and Dimension 83 films, a total of 428 films. This figure is not too far off the 383 discrepancy between the 2016 AFR figure and the D23 numbers, but additional work would be needed to verify my own preliminary data.

Similarly, Touchstone Pictures and Hollywood Pictures films were released without the Disney name appended to their production or distribution credits, thus the link between these studios and Disney was not readily apparent to the casual viewer[29]. However, films from these studios are included in D23's list of Disney films, and each film has its own entry in *Disney A to Z: The Official Encyclopedia* listing plot and production details, whereas Miramax films do not. It would appear that Disney itself considers Touchstone and Hollywood films to be *Disney films*, but do audiences? This question will be addressed later in the research, but based on the lack of visible Disney branding on these films, it has been decided not to include films produced by these studios in the operational definition of Disney film employed here.

Removing films produced by Miramax, Dimension, Touchstone and Hollywood from the equation leaves over 400 films produced by Disney's other studios to date. Clearly all theatrical feature films produced by the explicitly named Walt Disney Productions (1929-1983) and Walt Disney Pictures (1983-present) fall within the Disney films definition. All films produced by Pixar Animation Studios have been co-produced and/or distributed by BVPD or WDSMP, including those released before Disney bought Pixar in 2006. Films produced by the smaller WDS-created label, Disneynature, which has been producing natural history documentaries since 2009, are also clearly identifiable as Disney films.

Less obviously identifiable as Disney films on first glance are those produced by Marvel Studios and Lucasfilm, studios which were acquired by the WDC in 2009 and 2012 respectively, and had previously made films with non-Disney production and distribution partners. Since being acquired by Disney, all Marvel Studios[30] and Lucasfilm releases have been distributed in the US by WDSMP. While audiences may not have been aware that Touchstone and

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[29] Although Buena Vista Pictures Distribution *did* feature a stylised Disney castle on its logo.

[30] Marvel Studios is responsible for the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) franchise with its interconnected world of comic book characters including Captain America, Iron Man and Thor, who team up as The Avengers. However, Marvel characters are also the subject of films made by other studios: 20th Century Fox currently holds the rights to the X-Men and Fantastic Four characters, and Sony holds the rights to Spider-Man, although a deal was recently struck to share the rights to Spider-Man with Marvel Studios. The deal allows the Spider-Man character (played by Tom Holland) to be a part of the MCU franchise film *Captain America: Civil War* (2016b) as well as starring in a new series of Spider-Man films, beginning with *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017f).

Hollywood were Disney studios, it is arguable that Disney's high-profile acquisitions of Marvel and Lucasfilm may be more apparent to the casual film goer.

The connections between Disney and Marvel and Star Wars are even more obvious to anyone who has set foot in a Disney theme park or Disney Store, where Disney, Pixar, Marvel and Star Wars rides, parades and merchandise exist side-by-side. The world-building, franchising and brand development of Disney's Marvel and Star Wars films across film, TV, theme parks and beyond reflects that of its original Disney properties in a way that was rarely achieved with its Touchstone or Hollywood Pictures films. As such, the handful of releases from Marvel Studios and Lucasfilm to date have been included in the scope of Disney films for the purposes of this research. Further exploration of audience awareness and understandings of Disney's subsidiary studios will be explored in section 7.2.

3.2.5 Medium

Although it should already be quite clear, it is worth highlighting at this point that, unlike the majority of academic literature and media commentary about Disney films, this research does not limit itself to a discussion of animation. To discuss Disney films only in relation to animation is reductive and unhelpful, and perpetuates myths about WDS output. It may well be true that audiences conflate animation with Disney, but to better understand the connecting threads across the canon of Disney films, all Disney films need to be taken into account, as defined by the criteria above.

3.2.6 Timespan

Disney released their first original full-length feature film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937, and since this research considers feature films only, this is the obvious starting point for a consideration of Disney's film output. Some discussions of Disney films end with the death of Walt Disney in 1966, and

others begin with the Disney Renaissance in 1989, leaving a period, 1967-1988 under-represented in both academic and non-academic Disney literature.

Rather than restricting the current research to boundaries dictated by Walt Disney or the Disney Renaissance, I include every Disney film (as defined above) that has been released from 1937 until the end of 2015 in the scope of the research. The end date of 2015 represents the first full year to fall within the research period. Although reference may be made to more recent Disney film releases in the analysis, only the 390 films that have been identified using the operational definition of Disney film will contribute to the statistical data under analysis. A complete list of the 390 Disney films used in this research can be found in Appendix 2a.

3.3 Disney Films in Context

Disney means different things to different people. It is the surname of the original voice of Mickey Mouse, Walt Disney, and his business-minded brother Roy; it is the independent film studio that they built together, and the global company that it became; and it is also a multi-purpose synonym/epithet that covers animation, commercialism, homogeneity, childhood, theme parks, family entertainment, and many other themes. Janet Wasko has highlighted the necessity of taking the 'corporate context in which Disney operates […] into consideration' (2001c, p.152) to get a fuller picture of the Disney phenomenon.

In this section I will explore how Disney films and the Walt Disney Studios fit into the corporate context of the Walt Disney Company (WDC). I will also consider the broader context of Disney as a major Hollywood studio, and within the genre of family films more widely. This section will draw briefly upon some of the data gathered as part of the Disney film output survey of the research (for a discussion on methods and how this data was gathered see Chapter 4), and upon the operational definition of Disney films described in section 3.2.

3.3.1 Walt Disney Company and Walt Disney Studios

The WDC has been in the business of making theatrical films since 1923, beginning with the silent short *Alice's Wonderland* (1923) and the Oswald the Lucky Rabbit series of animated shorts, before *Steamboat Willie* (1928), with its synchronised sound, made an icon out of Mickey Mouse. Although Walt Disney and his studio did not invent the medium of animation, they 'did play an important part in developing many of the features and principles of mainstream animation' (Pallant, 2013, p.15). Technological developments such as the use of Technicolor in *Flowers and Trees* (1932), or new levels of depth in animation using the multiplane camera in *The Old Mill* (1937b) were demonstrated in the Silly Symphony series of shorts (1929-1939), but these 'dramatically increased the cost of cartoon production for Disney' (Pallant, 2013, p.30).

Using techniques honed through experimentation in theatrical shorts, Walt Disney set his artists to work creating his first feature length animated film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937c) 'as a way of generating enough profit to stay afloat in the turbulent economy and competitive market' (Pallant, 2013, p.30). The outcome was a huge critical and box office success, and adjusted for ticket price inflation, *Snow White* is still the tenth highest grossing film of all time in the US[31]. Since that time Disney has continued to produce animated features, as well as branching out into live-action, documentaries, television movies and series, direct-to-video releases, and many other entertainment sectors.

80 years since the success of *Snow White*, the WDC is, according to their 2016 Annual Financial Report (AFR), 'a diversified worldwide entertainment company with operations in four business segments: Media Networks, Parks and Resorts, Studio Entertainment, and Consumer Products & Interactive Media' (Walt Disney Company, 2017, p.1)[32]. Three of the WDC's business segments are made up of the following activities: Media Networks (MN) refers to Disney's television channels, which includes one of America's

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[31] According to data from Box Office Mojo. See: http://www.boxofficemojo.com/alltime/adjusted [Accessed: 13th February 2017].
[32] See Appendix 1a for an illustration of the WDC's different business segments and their constituent parts.

biggest networks, ABC, as well as ESPN sports cable channels, and over 100 Disney Channels worldwide; Parks and Resorts (P&R) includes Disney's theme parks based in California, Florida, Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Shanghai; and Consumer Products & Interactive Media (CP&IM) encapsulates Disney's merchandising, publishing and retail activities[33]. Together, MN and P&R bring in the bulk of the Disney Company's income – in 2016 this was $23,689 million and $16,974 million respectively (Walt Disney Company, 2017, p.31).

The fourth business segment, Studio Entertainment (SE), brought in $9,441 million in 2016, less than half of the revenue of MN[34], yet the output of SE encompasses the heart of the Disney brand. As well as creating music and stage musicals through the Disney Music Group and Disney Theatrical Group respectively, SE is the business segment that produces and distributes live-action and animated films. The primary means of film production occurs through Walt Disney Studios (WDS) and its subsidiary studios, which are referred to in Disney jargon as 'banners' (Walt Disney Company, 2017, p.12). Table 2 shows the banner studios that were part of WDS in 2015, while Appendix 1b illustrates the history of WDS in greater detail.

Banner Studio	Film Output	Example Films
Walt Disney Pictures *Incorporating* **Walt Disney Animation Studios**	Live-action Animation (2D and CGI)	*Cinderella* (2015d) *Big Hero 6* (2014b)
Pixar Animation Studios	Animation (CGI)	*Inside Out* (2015g) *The Good Dinosaur* (2015f)
Marvel Studios	Live-action adaptations of Marvel comics characters	*Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015c) *Ant-Man* (2015b)
Lucasfilm	Live-action Animation (CGI)	*Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015k) *Strange Magic* (2015l)
Disneynature	Live-action natural history documentaries	*Monkey Kingdom* (2015j)

Table 2: Primary WDS subsidiary ('banner') studios in 2015

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[33] Strangely, the CP&IM segment has also been the home of The Muppets Studio since 2014.
[34] CP&IM had revenues of $5,528 million in 2016, according to the 2016 AFR.

The banner studios release different genres of film, but their common denominator is generally an appeal to audiences of all ages[35]. The WDC has previously owned banner studios that produced films aimed at more mature audiences, including Hollywood Pictures and Miramax (plus its Dimension subsidiary), but these banners have since been retired or sold off. Touchstone Pictures, the first studio spun-off by the WDC in 1984 to produce more adult-oriented fair still exists, but only releases one or two films annually as part of a co-production deal with DreamWorks Pictures, a non-Disney studio.

As noted in section 3.2.3, until 1953, all but one of the feature films produced by Disney (then a small, independent studio) had been distributed through RKO Radio Pictures, a major Hollywood studio. From 1953 Disney began to distribute its own films through the newly created Buena Vista Distribution Company (which was renamed Buena Vista Pictures Distribution (BVPD) in 1986). BVPD has since handled the US theatrical distribution of almost all WDS films, including those produced by Pixar, Touchstone and Hollywood Pictures[36]. In 2007, BVPD was renamed Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures (WDSMP), which continues to distribute all theatrical films produced by the studio's various production banners in the US today[37].

Disney historian Robin Allan has acknowledged the importance of the SE segment to the rest of the WDC, noting that although 'the income generated from the parks and from the attendant merchandising is enormous… film is still the basis upon which the empire is built' (1999, p.258). And while Disney's mastery of corporate synergy means that 'each story the company tells, each theme the company deploys builds the Disney brand' (Budd, 2005, p.1), it is the films that continue to provide 'rides for theme parks and concepts for an endless stream of merchandising activities' (Puttnam and Watson, 1997, p.285), which in turn generates revenues for the Company's MN, P&R and CP&IM business

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[35] None of the banner studios operating today have released films rated R in the US, or 15 and 18 in the UK. Films are awarded G, PG or PG-13 certificates in the US, and U, PG, or 12A certificates in the UK, with a greater tendency towards the PG-13/12A in recent years, especially those films released by Marvel and Lucasfilm.

[36] Films produced by Miramax and Dimension were distributed by Miramax and Dimension Pictures, not BVPD.

[37] Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures replaced Buena Vista International as distributor of Disney films in the UK in 2008. Similar local versions of WDSMP also exist in other international markets.

segments. Disney's films not only have the biggest influence on the activities generated by the rest of the company's business segments, they are also inextricably bound up with the Disney that exists in audiences' imaginations. The historical and economic importance of film to the wider understandings of Disney informs the scope of this research.

The interlinking and symbiotic relationship between the WDC's business segments demonstrate the concept of synergy that was explicitly exploited by Michael Eisner when he took over as WDC CEO in 1984. Eisner described the Disney concept of synergy as follows:

> We insisted that each division help the other fellow. For the Disney Company, 'help the other fellow' meant the movie division would create a film… that could become a theme park ride or attraction… that could become a consumer product… that could become a television show… that could become a film sequel… that could become a cable show… that could become an international attraction… that could become a musical on Broadway… it goes on and on.
>
> (quoted in Santoli, 2015, p.xv, ellipsis in original)

The concept was not an entirely new one for the company, since Walt Disney had long ago discovered the benefits of cross-promotion through the television anthology series *Disneyland* (1954-1958) and its successors, which promoted (and was originally named for) the Disneyland theme park, as well as promoting and airing Disney shorts and feature films. However, under Eisner, the WDC began cross-promoting and synergising on a grand scale, as they added television networks (ABC, ESPN, Disney Channel), publishing (Hyperion, Disney Editions) and many other media channels to their portfolio (for a case study on Disney synergy in action see Wasko, 2001c, pp.70-83). At the heart of Disney's synergy, then and now, are the films, along with the music and characters that populate them.

3.3.2 Historical & Hollywood Contexts

As discussed in section 3.2, 390 Disney films were released in the 79 years between 1937 and 2015, an average of almost 5 per year, but as Figure 3 shows, the number of annual film releases has fluctuated over the decades. From *Snow White* to the end of the 1940s the studio produced one or two labour-intensive animated features per year (alongside many theatrical animated shorts). Output increased as live-action films, which were a lot quicker and cheaper to make than animated features, began to be produced in the 1950s[38]. Production of live-action films held steady through 1966 (the year founder and studio figurehead Walt Disney died) and into the 1980s, although animated features appeared less frequently.

The lack of Disney films released in 1984 coincided with a critical moment in the history of the WDC, when the company leadership's attitude to filmmaking – 'what would Walt do?' – saw Disney films struggling for relevance in modern Hollywood, and the company faced being bought out and stripped apart by Wall Street raiders (for a detailed account of this trying time for Disney see Taylor, 1987). New leadership, headed up by Michael Eisner, saw an increase in production up to a peak of eleven new Disney releases in 1995, at the height of the so-called Disney Renaissance, kick-started by a return to financially and critically successful feature animation with *The Little Mermaid* (1989c). A drop in output in the early 2000s was countered by later releases from acquired studios, Pixar, Marvel and Lucasfilm, and output peaked at 13 films per year in 2008 and 2014.

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[38] Following WW2, the UK government imposed a 75% import tax on American films, which led to Disney amassing over $1 million dollars in British box office revenues that could not be returned to the US without punitive results. Thus Disney decided to use the British-held funds to produce *Treasure Island* (1950b) in the UK, meaning that 'in effect, then, when Walt Disney finally crossed over into live-action, it was because the British government had forced him to do so' (Gabler, 2007, p.470).
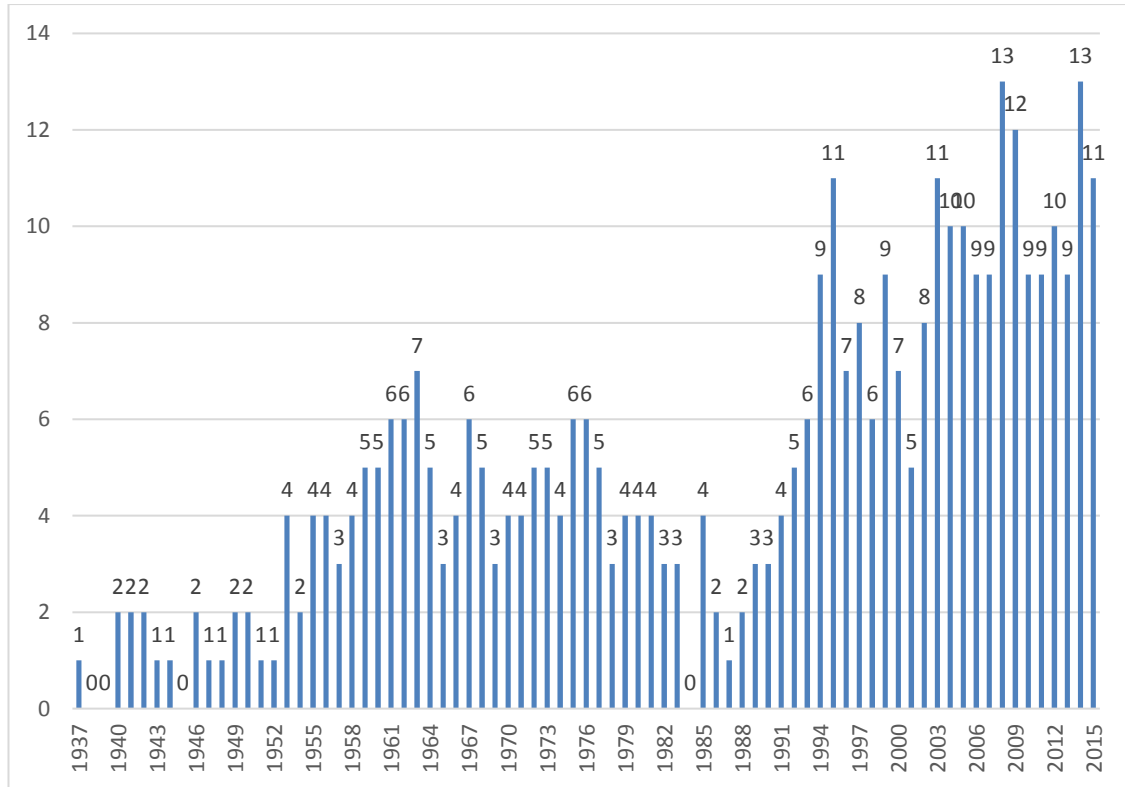
Figure 3: Number of Disney films released each year, 1937-2015

Source: Author's analysis of film output data.

This brief overview of Disney film releases over time does not show the whole picture, however, since (as noted in section 3.2.4) the WDC had reportedly released approximately 1,100 features by the end of 2016 (Walt Disney Company, 2017). Therefore, looking beyond the 390 films that have been identified as Disney films, Figure 4 shows the total number of films released by *all* studios that have been part of WDS since 1984. Included here are releases by Touchstone and Hollywood Pictures, Miramax and Dimension, and also Disney's direct-to-video films – all sources of films that were discounted from the operational definition of Disney film.

This data (which it should be noted is not as robust as that gathered on the 390 Disney films[39]) provides an overview of the wider filmmaking context of

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[39] Time restraints have not permitted me to fact-check and data cleanse the data gathered on the 1,000+ other films produced by Touchstone, Hollywood, Miramax, Dimension and direct-to-video releases in the same way that I have produced robust data on the 390 films designated as Disney films for the purposes of this research.

WDS. It can be seen that although no Disney films (as defined in this research) were released in 1984 as per Figure 3, Figure 4 shows that Touchstone produced its first two features (*Splash* (1984b) and *Country* (1984a)) and Walt Disney Home Video released an early direct-to-video title (*Where the Toys Come From* (1984c)).

From the early 1990s to the mid-2000s WDS film output increased significantly, particularly when the large numbers of films being released by Miramax are taken into account. By the time Miramax (and Dimension) were sold off in 2010, the WDS had consolidated its film output under the Disney name, with the odd Touchstone and direct-to-video release helping to keep annual output in double figures.
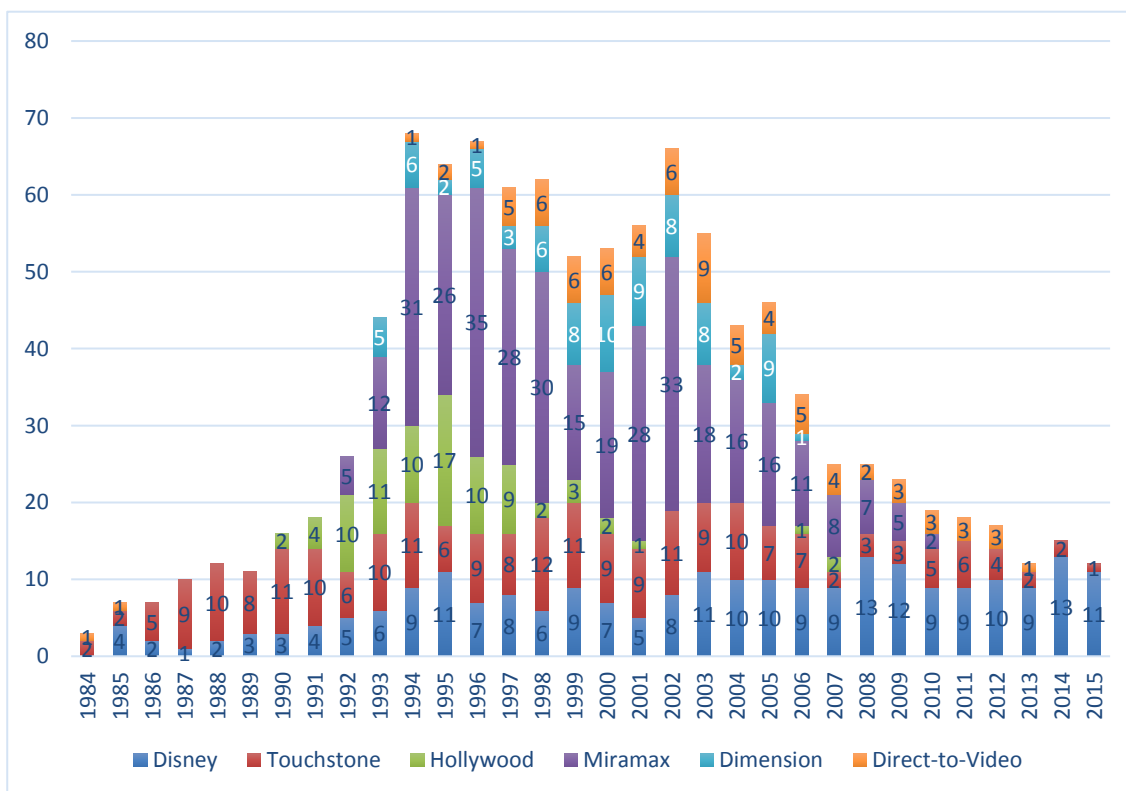
Figure 4: Films released by all studios owned by WDC, 1984-2015
Source: Data drawn from IMDb and Box Office Mojo.

As well as considering how the output of Disney films relates to the output of other WDS-owned film studios, it is also worth noting how WDS output fits into the context of wider Hollywood outputs. Figure 5 shows the number of

films released by the six major Hollywood film studios between 1984 and 2015[40]. It can be seen that WDS increased their output across their studios to a peak in the mid-1990s, before falling off into the new millennium, a trend replicated across Hollywood more generally.
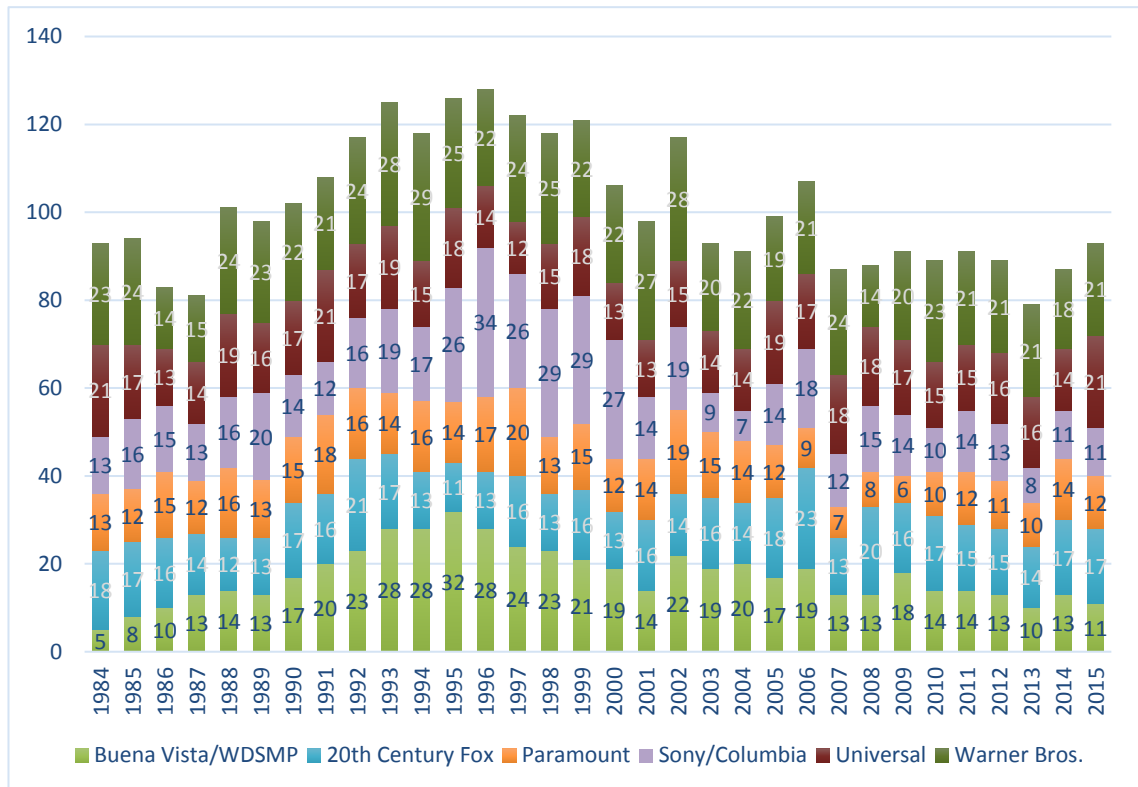
Figure 5: Films released by major Hollywood studios, 1984-2015
Source: Data collated from IMDb and Box Office Mojo.

This snapshot shows that fewer films are being released by the major Hollywood studios today compared with twenty years ago. Media commentators have speculated that 'increased pressure from Netflix and Amazon, those digital-disruption barbarians, has caused the big studios to consider changing the way they release movies […] by filling it with superheroes, action stars and

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[40] Source for this data is Box Office Mojo: http://www.boxofficemojo.com/yearly/ [Accessed: 16th February 2017]. The data has not been cross-checked to confirm accuracy for each of the Hollywood studios listed because the time and resources available for the present research is limited. The data does not take into account subsidiary studios such as Fox Searchlight, but it does include theatrical re-releases. The figures for Buena Vista/WDSMP include films produced by WDS and its subsidiaries (Touchstone, Hollywood Pictures) but not Miramax or Dimension.

CGI creatures, making more blockbusters than they used to, but fewer films in total' (Mumford, 2017). It is beyond the scope of this research to offer a more comprehensive commentary on the wider Hollywood picture, suffice to say that WDS' rate of film output appears to follow (or lead) the trends seen across its biggest competitors.

3.3.3 Disney Films as Family Films

Having placed Disney films in the context of Hollywood filmmaking, I now turn to Disney's place in the wider, less well-defined realm of family films, since 'for decades, Disney has been seen as family-friendly entertainment, a position which it has maintained very carefully' (Davis, 2013, p.7). The nature of family-friendly entertainment is problematic, particularly the 'family' part of the concept.

Huston et al suggested in 1994 that the concept of the nuclear family consisting of a married mother and father and their children was old-fashioned, and instead provided a definition of 'family as cohabitational arrangements of adults and children in which the adults assume legal responsibility for the welfare and maturation of the children' (Huston et al., 1994, p.5). They claimed that this definition 'accommodates the nuclear family as much as alternative family forms of the present and future' (Huston et al., 1994, p.5). More recently, the authors of *Family Films in Global Cinema: The World Beyond Disney* (Brown and Babington, 2015) have defined the family film as 'characterised by appeal to adults in addition to broad suitability and appeal to children' (p.2). Both definitions include children as part of the family dynamic, and thus both sets of authors subscribe to a limited definition of the concept of family.

Non-heterosexual households are implicitly left out of the concept of family, as are couples without children. Speaking as a married gay man with no children, I find the implied biases of the term 'family' frustrating and loaded with prejudice against my own family unit. So when commentators describe Disney films as family-friendly entertainment they seem to imply that children are the primary audiences, which in turn implies that adults who enjoy such entertainment outside of the commonly understood definition of family are deviating from the norm. The bias that the family label brings to films can lead to

critics and academics overlooking certain types of film, particularly in genre studies, where very little has been written about family films. Describing a film as family-friendly is really suggesting that it is suitable for *all* audiences, which is also a description of the British Board of Film Classification's (BBFC) 'universal' rating (BBFC, 2014, p.16)[41] – so perhaps 'family films' might be better described as 'universal' films[42].

In his original exploration of the Hollywood family film, Noel Brown points out that 'many family films are misleadingly referred to critically and popularly as 'children's films', or even 'kids' films'' (2012, p.9). A film with no redeeming features for adult viewers may be written off by critics as a kid's film, as children are considered uncritical and undiscerning audiences. This view is not shared by Disney's John Lasseter, who claims to 'always aim high because kids are incredibly intelligent, I think much more intelligent that any adult gives them [credit for]' (The Film Programme, 2016d). Referring to family film genres, Steve Neale has observed that 'adults who find themselves viewing examples of these genres have often to disown their enjoyment by maintaining that such genres – and such pleasures – are not really for them, but for children, teenagers, others less 'responsible' (less 'adult') than they are themselves' (1999, pp.35-36).

It could be argued that Disney's adult audiences merely conform to the consumer role forced upon them as children by Disney's prolific marketing activities. Robin Allan references the power of Disney's inescapable brand (and incidentally describes the concept of the Fantasy Disney Genre) when he notes that 'everyone has their own Disney in their conscious and unconscious mind and the modern child […] cannot escape the all-pervasive iconographic power of Disney imagery' (1999, p.xv). The aggressive nature of Disney's consumption-led approach to film-making through franchise-building and merchandising may seem to be more explicit and problematic to adult consumers than children. However, Disney appears to be creating more and more merchandising opportunities for older consumers by 'adapting its brand

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[41] Family films may also receive a PG (guidance) or 12A certificate. Films that receive a 15, 18 or especially R18, would not be considered family films, using the traditional definition. Of course, an 18 certificate film can be described as family viewing for my husband and me since we have no family members under the age of 18.

[42] Not to be confused with those films released by Universal Studios, of course.

image in order to achieve the widest possible consumer base' (Giroux and Pollock, 2010, p.207).

An example of Disney's deviation from addressing traditional child and family audiences is the 'growing awareness of the gay community in recent years by the Walt Disney Company, and a purposeful marketing towards this community' (Griffin, 2000, p.xxii). When Michael Eisner became CEO of Disney in 1984, the company began hosting an event called 'Gay Days' at Walt Disney World, which has since become 'one of the largest gay-pride events in the world' (Cloud, 2010). The new Disney management also determined that 'adult homosexuals would be more likely to move beyond the Burger King or McDonald's "Happy Meal" collectibles and buy the more expensive ceramic replicas of characters, music boxes or original cel artwork' (Griffin, 2000, p.192). Personal experience has proved Disney management correct on this front.

Aside from Disney Editions books, Chamilia charm bracelets, Vans trainers, and other examples of merchandising with adult audiences in mind[43], Disney has inspired adult audiences to respond to its films in rather unorthodox ways. For example, artist David Kawena (2015) has created images featuring Disney's animated princes and heroes as semi-naked, homoerotic male models. These works are tame compared to those found on blogs with names like *gaydisneysluts.tumblr.com*[44] and *disney-hot-yaoi.tumblr.com*[45], where Disney characters are depicted in pornographic poses. To paraphrase Jessica Rabbit[46], they're not bad; they're just drawn that way.

Writers for the BuzzFeed and Cosmopolitan websites are particularly preoccupied with offering up Disney personality quizzes and reimagined images of Disney princesses with new-born babies, 'realistic' body hair, or in homage to *Fifty Shades of Grey*. Highlighting the proliferation of such articles is the existence of several parodies of this phenomenon, including '12 Disney

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[43] Such merchandise is rarely to be found in British Disney Stores, however. Adult oriented merchandise may be found in other high street stores (such as jewellers or shoe shops), online, or in the Disney theme parks. See section 7.3 for further discussion of adult merchandise.
[44] Accessed: 10th April 2017.
[45] Accessed: 4th November 2015. Yaoi – also known as 'Boys' Love' – is a Japanese genre of comics that focuses on romantic or sexual relationships between male characters, and is typically aimed at a female audience.
[46] *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988b).

Princesses As Lukewarm Bowls Of Water' (Dannnnnnnnnnnny, 2015). The pun-packed post draws attention to the commentary carried out by Disney's online audiences and raises intriguing questions about why such re-workings exist, and whether there is more to the phenomenon than simply 'click bait' to draw people to BuzzFeed's website.

While Disney films and the Disney brand more widely are held up to be the epitome of family entertainment, fan and consumer activity continues to prove that Disney films are as much a source of pleasure, inspiration and merchandise for adults as they are for children. To classify Disney films in the family film genre may be accurate in many ways, but this genre label also has the potential to disenfranchise many of the adult audiences who enjoy Disney films. Such attitudes should be kept in mind when considering the question of how adult audiences (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have established the following three research questions (RQs):

RQ1: What exactly is a Disney film?

RQ2: How do adults perceive Disney films?

RQ3: How do adult audiences (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films?

To answer these questions I will explore notions of the two different Disney film genres: the Tangible Disney Genre (TDG) and the Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG), which are respectively constructed by the tangible film output of the WDS, and by the shared perceptions of audiences. These questions are important as they have been overlooked by scholars in the past, or when Disney audiences have been considered, such research has become outdated as Disney films have changed significantly since the turn of the century.

An operational definition of Disney film has been presented, setting out the scope of the research. 390 films covering the period from 1937 to 2015 have been identified as Disney films and will constitute the core of the Disney

film data that will be analysed in this research and thus used to describe the TDG and discover what exactly a Disney film is.

This chapter has also seen Disney films placed in their corporate context as part of the Walt Disney Company and the Walt Disney Studios, and consideration has been given to how release patterns of Disney films have changed over the last 80 years. The position of WDS and Disney films in the modern Hollywood studio system was briefly addressed, and the consequences of defining such films as family films was considered with reference to the ways that adult audiences perceive Disney films.

With gaps in the existing literature defined in Chapter 2, and the research questions defined and placed in context in the present chapter, in Chapter 4 I will set out the methodology and individual methods used to answer the three research questions.

Chapter 4
Methodology & Methods

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I set out the methodology used to answer the three research questions posed in the previous chapter, taking into consideration the contexts and definitions that have been established. I will then move on to discuss the individual methods that have been chosen to best fit this methodology and answer the research questions. The design and selection of these methods is discussed with reference to existing research in section 4.3, before moving on in section 4.4 to explain how these methods were practically implemented in this research.

4.2 Methodology

The research questions set out in Chapter 3 involve identifying what exactly a Disney film is, finding out adult audience perceptions of Disney films, and using both sets of resultant data to determine how adults (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films. Previous research on Disney audiences has tended to focus on audiences, ignoring Disney's actual output, and these singular methodologies have left gaps (as seen in Chapter 2).

The research therefore requires a methodology that can fully incorporate the answers to all three research questions, combining quantitative statistical data pertaining to Disney films with qualitative and quantitative data relating to audiences. There is no off-the-shelf methodology that fits these three research questions, thus I have designed a complex (but not complicated) mixed methods approach that is driven by the needs of the research.

To discover the perceptions of adults who watch Disney films it would seem obvious that some kind of audience research framework is necessary. For such audience research to be meaningful it is also imperative to consider what it is that the audiences are watching and responding to – in this case the Disney

films that they are either watching or are aware of. By conducting a comprehensive survey of films produced by Disney – those that are available to be watched by audiences – it will be possible to define the Tangible Disney Genre (TDG), and then by discovering the perceptions of Disney films by adult audiences the Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG) will come into focus. The two genres can then be compared in order to understand how adult audiences (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films.

Writing about audience studies, Gillian Rose notes that researchers in this field 'sometimes pay less attention to the preferred meaning of television images in order to pay more attention to the audiences' meanings' (2012, p.291). For the present research it is not actually necessary to pay attention to the preferred meanings of the Disney films in question (which could be gleaned through textual analysis, for example), as it is the shared perceptions that adult audiences hold of Disney films as a concept or genre that are most pertinent to this research. However, it is important to have an objective overview of the themes and genres present in Disney films historically (characterised as the TDG) to determine how closely adult audiences' subjective perceptions (the FDG) match up with the films that have been produced.

Considering the objective output of Disney's film studios will require a scientific, statistical, and standardised quantitative approach, while the more subjective perceptions of audiences will need a qualitative approach that takes into account the more unpredictable responses of the human subjects involved (Robson, 2011). The division of quantitative and qualitative approaches is not so cut-and-dried, however, as it is possible to generate quantifiable data from audience research, and to conversely apply qualitative methods to the interpretation of Disney's film output. It is therefore possible to find a third way that involves a combination of these two approaches, referred to most frequently as mixed methods (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, Brannen, 1995, Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, Bryman, 2012), but also known as multi-strategy research (Robson, 2011), or method triangulation (Grix, 2004).

The methods chosen for this project will be detailed below, but I first want to consider some of the benefits and limitations that come with combining qualitative and quantitative methods in a mixed methods approach. The mixed

methods approach is 'about observing an object of study from different angles' (Grix, 2004, p.136). The object of study here is the Disney film, and the different angles to consider include the films being watched, the studio that has produced them, and the audiences watching them. There is no single method that could satisfactorily encompass all of these angles of investigation to provide meaningful results. Mixing methods also allows the 'limitations of one method [to be] offset by the strengths of another method, and the combination of quantitative and qualitative data provide a more complete understanding of the research problem than either approach by itself' (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p.8).

In *Mixing Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Research* (1992) Julia Brannen raises concerns about whether 'the individual researcher [can] be equally competent in both qualitative and quantitative methods' (p.20), and suggests keeping the two types of method separate to 'guard against a creeping pragmatism' (p.33). Charles Teddlie and Abbas Tashakkori, who have devoted several books to mixed methods research (1998, 2003, 2009), do not share Brannen's concerns, describing 'mixed methodologists [as] working primarily within the pragmatist paradigm and interested in both narrative and numeric data and their analyses' (2009, p.4). Colin Robson observes that multi-strategy research has come to be more accepted in recent years for several reasons, including 'the realization by both practicing researchers and methodologists that pragmatism provided a highly compatible theoretical underpinning to mixing the two types of method in the same project' (2011, p.30).

Several textbooks make reference to the pragmatic influence on mixed methods research design; Creswell and Plano Clark note that 'mixed methods research is "practical" in the sense that the researcher is free to use all methods possible to address a research problem' (2011, p.13). My approach can be categorised as that of a pragmatist, described as someone who studies their topic 'in a way that is congruent with their value system, including units of analysis and variables that they feel are most likely to yield interesting responses' (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p.90). I have chosen methods that I believe allow me to competently and practically consider the concept of adult

audiences and Disney films from several perspectives, thus producing a more complete picture of the research topic.

Teddlie and Tashakkori describe the phenomenon of *methodological eclecticism*, whereby the mixed methods researcher selects and integrates 'the most appropriate techniques from a myriad of [qualitative, quantitative], and mixed methods to more thoroughly investigate a phenomenon of interest' (2003, p.8). Rather than allowing the selected methods to lead the research, and being mindful of 'falling into the trap of using various methods superficially' (Grix, 2004, p.137), the methods that have been selected are deliberately driven by my three research questions as illustrated in Table 3. Although the methods were not chosen to fit any particular existing research design, the final structure could be described as 'a fully mixed concurrent equal status design […] [whereby] the quantitative and qualitative phases are mixed concurrently at one or more stages [and] both elements are given approximately equal weight' (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2009, p.270).

Although mixed methods is becoming more accepted as a research design, it should be noted that it 'is not intrinsically superior to mono-method or mono-strategy research' (Bryman, 2012, p.649). As such, in the next section I will provide a rationale for each of the five individual methods employed in this research, which, taken together, will illustrate that a mixed methods approach is justified to answer the given research questions. These five methods have been designed to complement each other, but some are more important than others.

For example, the sample survey (questionnaire) and focus groups form a large bulk of the primary data to be gathered from audiences, while the output surveys draw on secondary sources to provide quantitative data to map against the quantitative data provided by the questionnaire. Several qualitative questions from the sample survey will inform and complement the qualitative material gleaned from the focus groups. Elite interviews with people connected to Disney in various capacities, carried out by myself as well as gathered from secondary sources, will provide an extra resource to draw on at the analysis stage. Running through and alongside these methods is an autoethnographic thread drawn from my own valuable experiences as not only an academic

familiar with Disney history, but also as an adult Disney audience member and fan.

	Research Questions	Methods	Outcomes
RQ1	What exactly is a Disney film?	Output surveys Elite Interviews	Tangible Disney Genre (TDG)
RQ2	How do adults perceive Disney films?	Sample survey (Questionnaire) Focus groups Autoethnography	Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG)
RQ3	How do adults (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films?	Elite interviews + *Comparison of TDG and FDG*	Research Conclusions

Table 3: Research questions, methods and outcomes

4.3 Methods: Design

In the previous section I discussed the rationale for choosing a methodology that applies complex mixed methods. In this section I will consider the different methods selected as most appropriate for answering the research questions detailed in Chapter 3.

The methods for gathering audience data discussed below are not the only methods available, however they are the most appropriate and practical to answer this particular set of research questions. The relative ease with which a sample survey questionnaire can be distributed, and the potential respondents it might reach, offer far greater returns than conducting individual audience interviews, for example, which is a time and labour intensive process that would be better suited to a case study approach. Likewise, participant observation and ethnography represent proven qualitative methods for gathering data, but on a more individualised basis that is not appropriate here. It would not be possible

to carry out an ethnography of a family, or a particular cinema, for example, and still be able to make generalisable observations about adult audiences and their relationships with Disney films on a broader scale. Such methods may work for a case study approach for a particular location or a specific film, but not when considering the Disney film canon as a whole.

As I was more interested in the audiences who watch the films, I determined that it was not necessary to carry out a document analysis in Disney's archives, which are anyway closed off to most researchers. It would be advantageous to have sight of internal documents to discover the company's changing ethos and goals for its various film studios, but such research is beyond the scope of the research questions and resources currently under investigation. Such document analysis would be a great opportunity for future research, however, offering a chance to compare Disney's corporate filmmaking intentions with the TDG that will be defined by a survey of the Disney film canon.

4.3.1 Disney Films: Output Surveys

As mentioned in section 2.2.1, the researchers of the Global Disney Audiences Project (GDAP) employed questionnaires, interviews and observations to conduct their research on Disney audiences across the globe. However, they neglected to analyse the Disney products (such as films, TV series and comic books) that had been consumed by their research participants. The GDAP facilitators asked their contributing researchers to carry out a broad market analysis in their countries, which confirmed that 'Disney products [were] available, in abundance, in every country surveyed' (Phillips, 2001, p.56). These surveys did not specifically single out Disney films, and participants' subjective perceptions of Disney were not compared with the objective output of Disney's film studios, thus assessments of the relationships between Disney films and their audiences were incomplete.

Only by analysing what adult audiences understand by the concept of a 'Disney film' and how shared assumptions about the Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG) influences their perceptions, and then comparing these perceptions and

understandings with the Tangible Disney Genre (TDG), can a more comprehensive picture of adult Disney audiences and their relationships with Disney films emerge. Therefore not only is it important to carry out research into the perceptions of audiences, but to carry out an output survey of Disney's films as well.

The most appropriate output survey for this research is a census, which collects data 'in relation to all units in a population, rather than in relation to a sample of units of that population' (Bryman, 2012, p.187) – in this case the population is comprised of all films produced by the WDS (as defined in section 3.2). Such a census of Disney's film output has not been carried out before. Chris Pallant (2013) has considered the history of Disney feature animation from an academic perspective, and there have been both official and unofficial surveys of various other aspects of the Disney film canon. For example, John G. West's *The Disney Live-Action Productions* (1994) is the only book on Disney to concentrate on live-action releases, although his journalistic analysis is restricted to a selection of films that were released during Walt Disney's lifetime.

Similarly, Leonard Maltin's authoritative and Disney-endorsed *The Disney Films* (2000) reviews all films released during Walt Disney's lifetime at length, including all live-action and animated releases, and also provides a less comprehensive overview of the films released between 1967-2000. No comprehensive, quantitative output survey of the Walt Disney Company's feature film output has been completed to date. There has been plenty of research carried out into individual Disney films, which generally assume that there is a universally understood perception of what a Disney film is in the public and academic consciousness (see section 2.2), but there remains a need for the TDG to be properly defined. A sample survey of Disney's film output would not be sufficient to fully understand the TDG, thus a survey of the entire output is needed.

The criteria used for setting the scope of this research, including the timespan and the operational definition of a Disney film, was discussed in section 3.2. Using these parameters, I identified 390 films that would need to be analysed to define the TDG. Lacking the resources to carry out a textual

analysis, or even a cursory viewing, of all 390 films within the timescale of the project[47], I determined that instead it would be possible to take a census of this data, and then carry out a statistical data analysis using existing resources. The census could be carried out using a combination of secondary sources to provide robust, reliable data. The subsequent statistical data analysis would then provide a broad overview of the typical Disney film, and how this has changed over time, the results of which could then be compared with audience data gathered through the sample survey and focus groups, as detailed below.

Further to the census of the entire Disney feature film canon, a more focused sample survey was also deemed to be necessary – by choosing 2015 as the case study year[48] I could consider how contemporary Disney output compares to the data generated in the historically comprehensive census. I could also consider the 12 films released by Disney in the US and UK in 2015 in more depth compared to each of the 390 films in the entire canon[49]. By subjecting these 12 films to a survey that included promotional activities, merchandising, and home media, I could consider how the Disney film exists in a broader context, outside the multiplex. The films in the 2015 case study can be seen in Appendix 2b.

Film is no longer something that is only (if ever) experienced in a cinema for many audiences (especially those unwilling to demonstrate their interest in Disney films in such a public environment), and so a survey of Disney films available on home media, streaming services, and British television will provide an insight into the exposure that audiences have to different Disney films. Such exposure will contribute to their understandings and perception of the FDG. Exposure to Disney through character merchandising, use of images in

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[47] By August 2017 I had managed to acquire 385 of the films on DVD/Blu-ray, and found another 5 available online; to date I have seen 164 of the 390 films (42%) in the sample.

[48] 2015 was chosen partly because it was the first full year to fall within the period of the research, and also because, when both UK and US release dates are taken into consideration, all of Disney's subsidiary studios (WDP, Marvel, Pixar, Lucasfilm and Disneynature) were represented in the films released.

[49] There were actually 13 films released by Disney in the UK and US in 2015. At the time of preparing the research methods (writing the questionnaire and focus group questions) I was not aware that *ABCD 2* (2015a) would have a (limited) US release, and the status of such international productions was still being considered for the scope of the study (see section 3.2 for more on this). *Monkey Kingdom* (2015j) was also not released in the UK and thus was not included within the questionnaire, however I did discuss it within focus groups and included it as part of the 2015 case study.

advertising and licencing deals, and the Disney theme parks will also contribute to the FDG; but considerations of such a wide range/scope of materials is beyond the limits of the current research, which is focused on Disney's feature films.

It would have been possible to subject each of the 12 films in the 2015 case study survey to individual textual or content analyses to consider the identity of the audience(s) each film was suitable for; however such an analysis would rather miss the point of the research question. Thus to consider the perceptions of Disney films held by adult audiences a detailed understanding of individual films was not considered necessary.

The implementation of output surveys in this research is discussed in section 4.4.1.

4.3.2 Disney Films & Audiences: Elite Interviews

Considering the volume of audience research and statistical analyses planned to answer the research questions, it may seem excessive to include interviews in the research methodology. However, rather than trying to penetrate Disney's famously private walls to talk with their marketing, publicity or filmmaking teams, a task that has proved fruitless to more established and better resourced researchers (unless working on a Disney-endorsed publication), I determined to gather a number of interviews with willing participants who might add a fresh perspective to the analysis.

So-called elite interviews are a way of getting an insider's view on a particular topic. To answer my research questions I did not need access to Walt Disney Company CEO Bob Iger, but to think more widely about adult audiences' relationships with Disney films it seemed advisable to at least make initial enquiries of people with alternative views on the subject.

The implementation of elite interviews in this research is discussed in section 4.4.2.

4.3.3 Audiences: Sample Survey (Questionnaire)

It would be difficult to carry out audience research without speaking to the audiences in question. Of course, a research project of any size, even beyond the limits of a PhD, cannot identify and analyse every audience member for any particular film or production company, especially one with the global reach of Disney. It thus becomes necessary to identify an appropriate sample of the audience from which to draw data and conclusions about the broader audience base.

I revisited the work of the Global Disney Audiences Project (GDAP) to begin thinking about how I might gather audience responses. The GDAP took an international approach to its investigation of people's interactions with the wide-ranging activities of the Disney Company through a 'tripartite method consisting of questionnaire, interview and observation' (Phillips, 2001, p.33). The questionnaire used was standardised across the 12 countries taking part, where local researchers conducted their own interviews, focus groups and observations to contribute to not only a 'broad geopolitical perspective, but also individual, differentiative, diacritical examinations of Disney founded upon the perspective of the audience' (Phillips, 2001, p.36). Being a lone junior researcher I do not have access to the network of researchers who comprised the GDAP contributors, but I identified the questionnaire as a potential sample survey tool for gathering both quantitative and qualitative audience data on a wide scale, and focus groups as a method of interrogating the resultant questionnaire data.

The GDAP contributors focused on issues concerning Disney and Disney products that were local to their native country. Initially I intended to consider Disney from a British point of view, investigating Disney as a particularly American phenomenon in the UK, expanding on the work of David Buckingham, author of the GDAP's British chapter (2001). However, as the research focus developed in the direction currently under analysis, the British angle became less important as a framing device. Instead, I determined that focus groups could provide a local, British-based case study to consider the outcomes of the questionnaire, which, being distributed online, could not be guaranteed to only reach British respondents. The methodology used in this research should be

adaptable to other territories or aspects of the Disney canon for the purposes of any future research.

To draw conclusions about the identities and opinions of adult audiences, a significant number of respondents is required. It would be impossible to produce a census of the entire adult film-going population, thus a sample of this population would be sufficient to draw conclusions (see Bertrand and Hughes, 2005, Wimmer and Dominick, 2006). A probability sample, which is 'selected according to mathematical guidelines whereby each unit's chance for selection is known' (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006, p.89), would not be easy given that my potential respondent population was so large. Selecting audience members to sample mathematically would be difficult unless I restricted my population, by choosing people from a narrowed pool, such as the student body of a university, or the employees in a particular workplace. Narrowing my potential population in this way would bring its own issues, however, by creating an immediate bias in the respondent base.

It would therefore be preferable to conduct a nonprobability sample using participants who could complete the survey voluntarily. Although there is evidence that 'people who willingly participate in research projects differ greatly from non-volunteers' (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006, p.91), there is precedent for proceeding in this way, including in the field of Disney audience research. For example, the GDAP coordinators, who achieved a survey sample of 1,252, acknowledged the potential for selection bias in the way that their survey was distributed, but saw 'no reason to expect that this sample, as an example of a Disney target market, [would] differ substantively from Disney's target market at large' (Phillips, 2001, p.40). The seemingly inescapable reach of Disney films in Western culture (and beyond) is such that even if a respondent has not (knowingly) seen a Disney film, either ever or in their adult lives, they would still be likely to have a preconceived opinion about what a Disney film might be. However, it should be noted that the results of nonprobability sampling 'are not intended to be generalised to a whole population' (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005, p.67), thus any conclusions made would need to be qualified with this consideration in mind.

Surveys can be used to 'get information about certain groups of people who are representative of some larger group of people of interest to us' (Berger, 2000, p.187), thus a survey would seem to be an appropriate method of obtaining a significant sample of the larger adult film audience. As a means of conducting a survey, the questionnaire is 'an efficient way of reaching a large number of respondents at relatively low cost' (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005, p.69). Questionnaires also act as a barrier to interviewer bias, and generate 'information that can be quantified and analysed statistically and thus can reach a higher degree of precision about the group being studied that other forms of research cannot duplicate' (Berger, 2000, p.191). Some of the pitfalls of using questionnaires include low response rates, misinterpreted questions, and sampling errors, although these issues can be partly mitigated through carefully targeted and planned questions and distribution, and pilot testing all questions prior to launching the questionnaire.

Nicholas Walliman notes that 'questionnaires are a particularly suitable tool for gaining quantitative data but can also be used for qualitative data' (2011, p.97), and in the spirit of the mixed methods approach discussed above, it is possible that a well-written and pilot tested questionnaire can provide a mix of both types of data.

The most efficient means of distributing and conducting questionnaires today is via online methods. Releasing a questionnaire online takes away some of the control that might come with asking participants questions face to face or over the telephone (labour intensive methods that may be open to interviewer bias), as the link may be shared in undesirable places, however it also allows the questionnaire to be easily shared on social media, email and mailing lists to reach a wider potential respondent base.

The implementation of questionnaire sample surveys in this research is discussed in section 4.4.3.

4.3.4 Audiences: Focus Groups

Of the various methods available to a researcher for 'eliciting, stimulating, and elaborating audience interpretations' (Hansen et al., 1998, p.262), the focus

group or group interview is one of the more efficient. While the qualitative and quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire provide information about the breadth of opinions on Disney films, focus groups represent an opportunity to 'understand the participants' meanings and interpretations' (Liamputtong, 2011, p.3) and add qualitative depth to the final picture for analysis.

Focus groups allow a researcher to ask targeted follow-up questions about a participant's responses, which is impossible to do through a questionnaire with standardised questions. Through discussion and exchanges between participants, as well as between the moderator and participants, focus groups can elicit responses 'in ways that are different from individual interviews' (Bryman, 2012, p.516). Focus groups are generally formed by participants with shared characteristics, such as gender, sexuality or age. Gathering data that can be generalised across a wide population can only be accomplished 'when several focus groups are conducted to achieve a satisfactory sample size' (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006, p.129). The scope of this research does not permit the facilitation of enough focus groups of different characteristics to make generalisable conclusions on a wide scale, however focus groups are still useful 'to enhance (support or refute) the main data collection instrument' (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006, p.131), which in this case is the sample survey.

The potential limitations of focus groups include the difficulty in organising and recruiting to the groups, especially if the researcher is unable to provide financial incentives, for reasons of limited resources and ethical considerations (paying participants could feasibly result in them providing responses that they think you want to hear). Focus groups can also pose practical problems in terms of transcription, facilitation (dealing with dominant or silent participants), and analysis (Bryman, 2012).

The implementation of focus groups in this research is discussed in section 4.4.4.

4.3.5 Audiences: Autoethnography

Narrowing the audience focus that began with a large-scale sample survey, through smaller qualitative focus groups, brings me to a singular case study:

me. It would be dishonest to conduct this research without acknowledging that I am both an academic and a fan of Disney films as well as the wider world of Disney. On Janet Wasko's scale of Disney Audience Archetypes (Wasko, 2001c, p.196) I would place myself somewhere between the 'fan' and 'enthusiastic consumer' categories, rather than with the more extreme 'fanatics' who 'strongly, sometimes obsessively, adore anything Disney and arrange their lives accordingly' (Wasko, 2001c, p.196). I would never condemn such 'fanatics'[50], or indeed those 'cynics' or 'resistors' who dislike Disney for their own reasons; I value their differing points of view, and I am able to enjoy Disney films myself while recognising their faults. As a researcher I thus cannot claim to be a 'value-free, totally objective, machine like automat[on]' (Robson, 2011, p.15), but then what researcher can?

Precedent for researchers who are also fans of their subjects can be traced back to Ien Ang, who opened her famous early audience work, *Watching Dallas* (1989), with the admission that she too enjoyed the television show discussed by her study's participants. Academics who write about Disney and Disney audiences have tended to adopt a neutral stance, neither professing love nor hate for their subject, although there are many non-scholarly polemics and hagiographies available.

Being a fan of popular culture, particularly Disney films, which are generally considered to be made for children, can be a tricky business at the best of times. But as Lynn Zubernis and Katherine Larsen note in their study of fandom around the television series *Supernatural* (2005-), academic fans (or 'aca-fans') 'experience a double dose of shame – shame that they are studying something as frivolous as fandom, and shame at taking pleasure in fandom ourselves instead of keeping a detached and rational distance' (2013, p.228). While I am not carrying out research into Disney fandom per se, since all opinions provided by participants about Disney will be considered, there is no escaping the fact that I *am* a fan. Rather than engage in a long justification of the pleasures I take from Disney films 'in order to make them more palatable to a cultural elite that does not need any more encouragement to dismiss what [I]

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[50] Wasko's archetypes are problematic; the term 'fanatic' has pejorative connotations that suggest mania, addiction, or uncritical enthusiasm for a subject.

study as frivolous and meaningless' (Zubernis and Larsen, 2013, p.46), I choose to use my experiences as a fan to benefit the research.

As an aca-fan I am well-placed to comment on my own experiences of both being a fan and of the reactions of those around me to my cultural and academic interest. I will therefore draw on these experiences using autoethnography to loosely frame my analysis, which will be generated by the more substantive data-collection methods described in this chapter. Hannah Grist has observed that autoethnography 'is a hotly debated and contested methodology' that has 'no singular definition' (2013, pp.4-10). Where the ethnographic researcher submerges themselves 'in the culture, language and day-to-day lives' (Grix, 2004, p.166) of their research subjects, the autoethnographic researcher draws from their own lived experiences in the culture. It should be noted that, rather than just repeating personal anecdotes, autoethnography 'requires a researcher to make personal experience meaningful for others' (Adams, 2011, p.158).

Autoethnography can be used both as a process or method for gathering data, and as a '*product* – a piece of research written in a very particular and self-reflexive way' (Grist, 2013, p.14, italics in original). An example of such a product would be Tony E. Adams' heartfelt discussion of same-sex attraction, *Narrating the Closet* (2011), which intersperses scholarly analysis with personal autobiographical passages. Zubernis and Larsen (2013) are up-front about their involvement in fandom, as writers of fan-fiction and users of fan message boards, and have drawn on their personal experiences to better understand, and gain access to, their research participants.

My approach to autoethnography will not be quite as explicit as Adams', peppering the text with autobiographical detail, rather I will use my position as an aca-fan in an 'attempt to subvert [the] dominant discourse' (Muncey, 2010, p.31) whereby Disney scholars maintain a neutral distance from their work. Zubernis and Larsen discuss the idea of fans 'outing' themselves, 'drawing a conscious parallel to the coming out process for GLBT individuals' (2013, p.76), while Adams' research focuses on the gay closet. I can relate to both pieces of research, being someone who has come out in the past as both gay and as a

Disney fan, thus the autoethnographic content of my research will see me burst through the Disney aca-fan door, singing 'Let It Go' as I do so.

4.4 Methods: Implementation

In the previous section I discussed the methods that were chosen to answer my research questions. In this section I discuss how these methods were subsequently implemented from a practical perspective.

As Colin Robson notes, it 'should be self-evident that there are ethical considerations when carrying out real world research involving people' (2011, p.194), and the audience portion of this study does indeed involve people. However, the subject matter under discussion is not of a sensitive nature. All questionnaire respondents were informed up-front about the nature of the project, asked to confirm that they understood what they had been told, and all responses were anonymous, with no identifying details such as names requested from participants. Likewise with the focus groups, participants were asked to read an information sheet and sign a consent form, which also advised them that their responses would be treated anonymously, to confirm their understandings of what was expected of both them and me.

On the basis of these ethical considerations, the whole research project was granted ethical approval by the University of Leeds ethics committee prior to the conducting of any audience-based research methods. The ethical approval form can be found in Appendix 5.

4.4.1 Disney Films: Output Surveys

Prior to beginning the PhD research I had already begun to compile an Excel spreadsheet of Disney's theatrical, television and direct-to-video films and shorts. I adapted and finished this database in the preparatory stages of the research, and used it to select the 390 films for statistical analysis (based on the operational definition of Disney film detailed in section 3.2). This database was compiled using sources such as *Disney A-Z: The Official Encyclopedia* (Smith,

2006, 2016), the Internet Movie Database (IMDb, n/d-a) and various other online and offline Disney sources to verify and cross-check the data.

In this database of Disney films I recorded original US release dates, alternate titles, film lengths, MPAA certificates, and details of production companies involved in each film release. I also recorded each film's availability on home media, any Academy Award nominations and wins, and aggregated critical ratings awarded by Rotten Tomatoes[51]. From IMDb I recorded which genre categories the film fell into[52]. Genre categories are notoriously subjective but since alternative options for discerning genres for each film were not possible (such as viewing all 390 films and assigning my own genre labels) I felt that IMDb's genre labels would prove to be reliable.

With the Disney film database in place I could extract information about genre, critical appreciation, and box office returns for analysis. It should be acknowledged that box office figures only give limited indication of a film's popularity with audiences, since buying a ticket does not guarantee enjoyment of the film, plus box office does not take home media, streaming and television viewing into account. The film data could then be used to identify historical trends and to compare with statistical audience data gathered from the questionnaire, for example to compare genres found in all 390 Disney films with the perceptions of the genres that audiences expect to see in Disney films (see Figure 31 in Chapter 7).

A further output survey, covering the adult-focused consumer products (merchandise) relating to the 12 films released in the US and UK in 2015, contributed to a contemporary case study (see Appendix 2b). If the research had greater scope and resources then a much more comprehensive analysis of Disney's publicity practices and adult audiences' relationships with them would

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[51] Rotten Tomatoes (www.rottentomatoes.com) combines star ratings from various critical reviews to create an aggregated score. These ratings are of course very subjective, and the aggregation has been criticised for its lack of subtlety; however the scores give a basic overview that can be useful for comparative purposes. Film critic Peter Bradshaw offers a good critique of Rotten Tomatoes here: https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2017/mar/24/brett-ratner-rotten-tomatoes-gets-a-semi-fresh-rating-from-me [Accessed: 11th April 2017].

[52] While IMDb users can update information on the website, 'Information submitted to IMDb won't appear immediately; it has to be checked and processed by our staff first' thus making it a more reliable reference source than Wikipedia. See http://www.imdb.com/help/show_leaf?resumeprocessingtimes [Accessed: 10 October 2016].

be a worthwhile area of investigation. Since 'posters and trailers 'contain visual and linguistic signs which encode films' narrative themes, denote the stars of the film, and signify its genre' (Bignell, 2002, p.182), I considered carrying out a content analysis of these texts. However, the value of such content analysis in answering the given research questions is minimal. Such an analysis would perhaps be more helpful if such para-texts were the subject of the investigation, but the films themselves and their audiences are at the forefront of this research.

It would be naïve to think that modern audiences only experience Disney films in the cinema. Since the 1950s and the debut of the American *Disneyland* (1954-1958) anthology series, Disney films have been broadcast on free-to-air television, and today have their own dedicated subscription TV channels, as well as being available through streaming platforms including DisneyLife, Disney's own subscription streaming service that launched in the UK in 2015. Disney also continues to release and re-release films to DVD and Blu-ray, having realised the money-making potential of home media back in the 1980s with the advent of VHS. Despite Disney's tendency to 'rest' certain titles in the so-called 'Disney Vault' (withdrawing them from sale) between theatrical and home media re-releases, Disney films have never been so readily available to audiences.

Alongside the output survey of Disney films, a sample survey of films released to British television over a four week period was also carried out, as well as a survey of the films that are available on DVD and streaming services, to get some idea of what films are being recirculated and therefore contribute to perceptions of the Fantasy Disney Genre. This data of course does not represent all incidences of audiences coming into contact with Disney films and associated media, but it will give a snapshot of the image that Disney seeks to portray in 2015 through the choices of films promoted and those gathering dust in the vaults.

4.4.2 Disney Films & Audiences: Elite Interviews

Interviews form a minor part of the overall methodology for the research, providing interesting background and alternative perspectives. While attempts to obtain interviews with existing Disney employees were met with no response (as expected), I was able to interview Lorraine Santoli, former Director of Corporate Synergy for The Walt Disney Company (1978-2000) and author of *Inside the Disney Marketing Machine* (2015) via Skype. Santoli was approached in her capacity as a former Disney employee and as someone who worked in a role that gave her oversight of Disney as a whole. As Director of Corporate Synergy she was responsible for overseeing how the film, theme park and television divisions worked together to ensure consistent messages were produced across the Disney media empire. She thus had an appreciation of audiences and the production of content for audiences, and inadvertently contributed to both the tangible and fantasy Disney genres.

I also interviewed Bob McLain, founder of Theme Park Press, a company that specialises in publishing books (including Santoli's) about Disney and by ex-Disney employees, and BuzzFeed editor Sam Stryker, author of a number of popular online Disney memes. I asked these two subjects about their experiences pertaining to the ways in which adults respond to Disney films. McLain's company is not affiliated with Disney, thus it was expected that his insights would be candid, while Stryker offered an alternative online perspective of Disney fandom. These interviews were carried out using Bristol Online Surveys software, which I also used to create and distribute the sample survey questionnaire (see 4.4.3), using questions tailored to the individual interviewees. This method allowed the interviewees to provide answers at their own convenience, but prevented my asking follow-up questions.

Additional interview material was sourced from existing Huffington Post interviews with Disney fan artists 'YANN-X' (Nichols, 2016a) and 'TT Bret' (Nichols, 2016b) about their motivations for responding to Disney's animated characters with particularly adult art. I also drew upon a recent Radio 4 interview with John Lasseter (2016d), in which the chief creative officer of Walt Disney Animation Studios and Pixar Animation Studios discussed the different approaches of the two studios, as well as Disney audiences.

4.4.3 Audiences: Sample Survey (Questionnaire)

As noted in section 4.3.3, questionnaires can be used to collect both quantitative and qualitative information, but the strength of any data solicited by a questionnaire is only as good as the questions asked. Those who have written about questionnaires all agree that questionnaires 'require a lot of time and skill to design and develop' (Walliman, 2011, p.97). Having decided early on in the research design process that a questionnaire would be an optimal data collection method, I devoted time and research to crafting the questions that would best reflect the focus of the research.

During the design period, I made a point of answering questionnaires produced by other academic researchers so that I could experience real-world examples of questionnaire designs, and to put myself in the position of respondent. Sloppy editing and ill-conceived structures were top of my list of things to avoid, with clarity and simplicity key watchwords for a successful questionnaire, and one which I was more likely to see through to the end. If possible I wanted my respondents to enjoy filling out the questionnaire, to increase the likelihood that they would be willing to share it further, and I hoped that the universally recognised subject matter would also go some way to encouraging participation.

I reviewed the GDAP questionnaire as a starting point, and considered adapting several of their questions, although ultimately I wrote my own, targeting them to Disney's film output. The purpose of my questionnaire was to gather data on several aspects of adult audiences' relationships with Disney. I wanted to know how audiences defined Disney films, how they interacted with them as adults, and their opinions about films from 2015 specifically. I also wanted to get an idea of the respondents' relationships with films more generally, and to capture some demographic information to assist with analysis of the data. Some of the questions were straightforward closed questions that allowed respondents to choose answers from a provided list of options (and the chance to answer 'Other' along with an explanation). Other questions were open, requiring respondents to write their own answers in as much detail as they wished – these responses ranged from a couple of words to several paragraphs.

In order to populate the lists of options for the closed questions, I brain-stormed various choices, and asked my peers for their advice. The pilot testing process was invaluable: I asked 18 friends with various levels of interest or knowledge in either Disney or my research to take the questionnaire and provide comments on each question. This process lead to the identification of spelling mistakes and to questions being redrafted to make them easier to understand and answer, as well as adding alternative options for closed questions. The pilot process was essential to the production of a robust questionnaire because, no matter how long I spent drafting the questions, I was so close to the research that sometimes obvious omissions or mistakes passed unnoticed. As a Disney fan I tried to ensure that any of my own bias towards Disney was removed from the questions and answers, but I was especially grateful to pilot testers who disliked Disney for their suggestions.

While I was required to provide information about the project at the beginning of the questionnaire to ensure that the respondents were clear about the purpose of the research, its ethical implications, and their right to withdraw at any point, I tried to restrict details about my motives for the research as much as possible. I did this to try and minimise the chance of respondents providing answers they thought I wanted to hear. I was also careful both in the introduction to the questionnaire and when sharing it online to explicitly state that I was seeking respondents with any level of interest in or knowledge of Disney, not (just) Disney fans, to maximise the potential number of responses.

The finalised questionnaire went live on 28th January 2016, and was open for six months[53]. The final film of the 2015 case study year, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015k), was released in mid-December, thus the launch date of the questionnaire allowed respondents the opportunity to have seen all of the 2015 case study films before completing their responses. All of the films from 2015 had been released on home media, as well as to streaming and subscription television services (at least in the US), by the close of the survey. The six month questionnaire timespan therefore provided an opportunity to

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[53] Appendix 3a details the distribution history of the questionnaire, Appendix 3b presents the questions asked, and Appendix 3c compiles the quantitative responses.

reach as many respondents as possible, and to ensure there had been opportunities for respondents to have seen the films under discussion.

I initially posted the questionnaire to my personal Facebook and Twitter accounts, where my relatively small number[54] of friends and followers completed, shared and retweeted it to their own networks. As this was not merely a study of Disney fans, I deliberately avoided Disney-related forums, instead posting the questionnaire to such sites as Mumsnet, Reddit, and via the @PeopleofLeeds Twitter handle to try and reach a diverse audience. I later used several academic JISC-mail mailing groups, including MeCCSA, BAFTSS and Fanstudies, to disseminate the questionnaire, relying on the good will of fellow researchers to spread the word. As the results came in I re-circulated, re-tweeted and re-posted the questionnaire link myself, and encouraged others to do the same.

Relying on social and academic networks was a potentially risky option, as it could be argued that those responding would be biased towards Disney fandom or overly representative of an academically-minded demographic. Regarding my social network, although friends knew broadly that Disney was my area of interest, other than those 18 who took part in the pilot study, few knew the intimate details of the research. The snowball effect of sharing the questionnaire on social media, and then having it shared again by respondents meant that the survey had something of a life of its own (although it did not quite go 'viral'). Of course, this meant that I was powerless to prevent the questionnaire being posted or shared to Disney fan communities, but I was hopeful that any bias would be visible and manageable in the results. I was able to monitor the results as they came in to get an idea of the demographics that the questionnaire was reaching, as well as the total numbers of responses.

Once the questionnaire closed on 31st July 2016, with 3,524 responses[55] (almost triple the 1,252 responses generated by the GDAP), I began reviewing

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[54] Approx. 220 Facebook friends and 65 Twitter followers at the time the questionnaire launched. These friends and followers were drawn from my postgraduate networks, school friends, family, and old workmates, and made up of people from a variety of demographic groups.

[55] I actually received 3,526 responses, but despite Question 1 asking respondents to confirm that they were 18 or over and give consent to participate in the research, at Question 18 two respondents selected their age group as 'Under 18'. I therefore excluded these two sets of results from the final data set.

the results using the Bristol Online Surveys software with which I conducted the survey. Using this initial overview of the quantitative data, as well as a brief initial read-through of the vast quantity of qualitative data, I began to formulate questions to be put to a number of focus groups. Following this initial scoping of the questionnaire data, I chose to use a combination of Excel and SPSS Statistics to review the quantitative data, and SPSS Text Analytics for Surveys to code and review the qualitative data. I began with the latter by grouping responses into broad categories, using the quantitative data as a guide for where trends and anomalies might be worth exploring further.

4.4.4 Audiences: Focus Groups

Just as a pilot questionnaire allowed me to fine-tune my sample survey, I also ran pilot focus groups. These two focus groups were conducted in the formative stages of the research, prior to writing the questionnaire, to test out ideas about the direction the research would take. While these two focus groups did not ultimately provide data for the final analysis, they allowed me to test questions, practice focus group facilitation, and to get a better idea, building on the literature, of how my future focus groups should be run.

The pilot focus groups were populated by first year media studies undergraduates, thus were as 'self-evidently unrepresentative of the general population' (Buckingham, 2001, p.273) as some of the groups used by the Global Disney Audiences Project. These groups were also unwieldy, with around 20 participants in each, when focus group literature recommends somewhere between five to ten participants (Hansen et al., 1998, Krueger and Casey, 2009). As such I decided to seek focus groups with a maximum of eight participants to keep the groups manageable.

Although some scholars 'urge caution when using groups of people who know and work closely with each other' (Robson, 2011, p.295), I sought participants who were already part of existing social groups or clubs since I would not be asking for information of a sensitive nature and believed that where participants already had a shared interest or knew each other already it could help encourage discussions. For similar reasons (as well as budgetary

concerns) I also determined to conduct the interviews in relaxed settings, preferably where the existing social groups gathered. When it came to considering the number of focus groups to run, I settled on a minimum of six so that I would have sufficient data to complement the large volume of qualitative data already generated by the questionnaire, and because of considerations regarding available resources (Hansen et al., 1998).

Questions for the focus groups were written out in advance to provide some structure and comparability across groups, however I was prepared to be guided by the participants' discussions. Each focus group participant was asked to read an information sheet (Appendix 4a), complete a short survey (Appendix 4b) and sign a consent form (Appendix 4c) to indicate their understanding and agreement to take part in the research. All focus groups were audio-recorded using two devices, to ensure that if one recorder failed (as happened on two occasions) there was a back-up recording of the session. The audio-recordings were then transcribed by me as soon as possible after each focus group session.

The purpose of the focus groups was to explore participants' opinions of Disney, and to some extent the ways in which they discussed these opinions, but I was not interested in recording every hesitation or other conversational details, thus the transcriptions were tidied up to ensure the analysis and coding would run smoothly. My approach to coding of the focus group transcript data was akin to my approach to methodology, proceeding pragmatically. I coded comments broadly into positive, negative and otherwise, and then drilled down into more detail.

While recruiting for the focus groups I referred to them as 'discussion groups' with the intention of appearing less like a market researcher and thus hopefully appearing more attractive to potential participants. I used personal and professional contacts to locate existing groups to approach, with a view to each focus group being comprised of a specific demographic. The demographics of the groups are detailed in Table 4.

ID	Group	# Participants	Age 18-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-44	Age 45+	Male	Female	Straight	LGBT+
			Participant Demographics							
A	Women's Institute	6		3	1	2		6	6	
B	LGBT group	4		3		1	4			4
C	Over 55s theatre group	7				7	4	3	7	
D	Theatre attendants	5				5	1	4	5	
E	Community group	7				7		7	7	
F	University union staff	5	1	2	1	1	2	3	5	
	Total Participants	34	1	8	2	23	11	23	30	4

Table 4: Focus groups and their demographics

The focus groups eventually included members of a Women's Institute and members of an over 55s theatre group – following which I was invited to a community group for older people for a third focus group. My attempts to recruit individuals who were not part of an existing group were less successful – nobody turned up to a general open call for participants in conjunction with a local independent cinema, and only four people volunteered for an LGBT+ specific group. I was more successful in recruiting a number of theatre attendants and several office workers from within my local students' union. A number of individual groups that I did approach either did not answer, or declined my invitation to participate.

Table 4 shows that over half of the focus group participants were aged 45 and over, two-thirds were women, with only four identified as LGBT+ (all gay men). There was not quite as much diversity as I would have liked across the focus groups, but having older participants was helpful to differentiate from previous studies (including the GDAP) that relied on university students for their data. It was reassuring that the splits between gender and sexuality were also reflected in the demographics of those who responded to my sample survey

questionnaire. If I had had the resources to recruit (and pay) participants through established focus group recruitment channels I would expect to have been able to source a more diverse pool of participants, but as it is I was happy with the number of people who volunteered to give up their time for free to discuss Disney films with me.

4.5 Conclusion

The mixed methods methodology and the individual methods discussed in this chapter resulted in a wealth of data for analysis, including data from 390 Disney films, 3,524 survey respondents, 34 focus groups participants, 3 interviews, and 1 autoethnographic source. The methods and analysis were approached in a pragmatic manner, and the results of the analysis can be found in the next three chapters, each answering a different research question as follows:

RQ1   What exactly is a Disney film? The TDG (Chapter 5)

RQ2   How do adults perceive Disney films? The FDG (Chapter 6)

RQ3   How do adult audiences (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films? Comparing the TDG and FDG (Chapter 7)

Chapter 5
RQ1: What exactly is a Disney film?
The Tangible Disney Genre

5.1 Introduction

> Hell, I'm Disney and I don't know [what a 'Disney' picture is].
> I've produced every type of picture except sick ones. The truth
> of the matter is, I try to make movies to please my own family.
> We don't aim at children specifically. When does any person
> stop being a child?
>
> (Walt Disney in 1962, quoted in Korkis, 2016, p.27)[56]

As discussed in previous chapters, the matter of defining what a Disney film might be is not as straightforward as it seems – even Walt Disney struggled. In this chapter I will use the statistical data drawn from my output survey to better understand how Disney's feature film output has developed from 1937-2015, and thus how a Disney film might be defined based on the actuality of the Walt Disney Studios' (WDS) output.

The definition of a Disney film that takes shape in this chapter I am calling the Tangible Disney Genre (TDG). The concept of the TDG, introduced in section 3.1, relates specifically to the idea of Disney films as a genre based solely on the actual films produced and distributed by WDS and its subsidiary studios (as defined in section 3.2). Where the Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG, discussed in Chapter 6) is a more subjective, nebulous concept that exists in the shared understandings and perceptions of Disney film audiences, the TDG is based on a more objective, scientific approach to the film texts themselves.

Table 5 features a snapshot of figures that have been calculated from data gathered on the 390 Disney films in the census, showing what the features of an average Disney film might look like. In the following sections of the

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[56] Parenthesis in the quotation appears in Korkis' original.

chapter I will examine some of these features in greater depth to get a clearer image of the different facets of the TDG.

Feature		Data in Calculation[57]
Average Film Length	**97 mins**	390 films
Average Rotten Tomato Score	**62% (Fresh)**	290 films
Average Budget	**$70,405,442**	202 films
Average US Gross (unadjusted)	**$87,091,827**	273 films
Average Releases per Year	**5 films**	390 films / 79 years
MPAA Ratings	**59% G**	388 films
	36% PG, 4% PG-13	
Medium	**73% Live-action**	390 films
	27% Animation	
Total Oscar Nominations	**204**	93 films
Total Oscar Wins	**53** (26% success rate)	35 films
Availability on DVD/Streaming	**99%**	390 films
Most Prolific Directors	**Robert Stevenson**	19 films
(Directed 10+ films)	**Norman Tokar**	15 films
	Vincent McEveety	12 films
Most Frequent Genre (IMDb)	**Family (81%)**	390 films
Least Frequent Genre (IMDb)	**Horror (1%)**	390 films
Most Popular Source of Story	**Book/Story/Play (35%)**	390 films
Disney Digital 3D Releases	**11%**	390 films

Table 5: Headline figures from census of 390 Disney films

Source: Analysis of all data gathered on Disney films, from various sources.

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[57] Certain data, such as budget, gross and Rotten Tomato score, was unavailable for some of the films in the census, so the *Data in Calculation* column indicates how many films the averages were drawn from.

5.2 Originality

A common criticism aimed at Disney films, as well as at modern Hollywood filmmaking more generally, is that they lack originality, although 'as much as people claim they love fresh and unique movies, they're more likely to shell out money for sequels and reboots' (Lang, 2015). The billion dollar worldwide box office takings for the likes of *Alice in Wonderland* (2010a), *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015c), *Toy Story 3* (2010f) and *Beauty and the Beast* (2017a) attest to this fact. However, data from the census indicates that there are actually fewer remakes and sequels in the Disney film canon than might be expected.

Figure 6 shows a breakdown of story origins for the 390 films in the census. Nearly one third of Disney films are based on original stories, and almost half are based on stories derived from existing sources, from books to theme park rides. The remaining fifth could be considered less original still, as these films include remakes, sequels and spin-offs of existing films and television series.
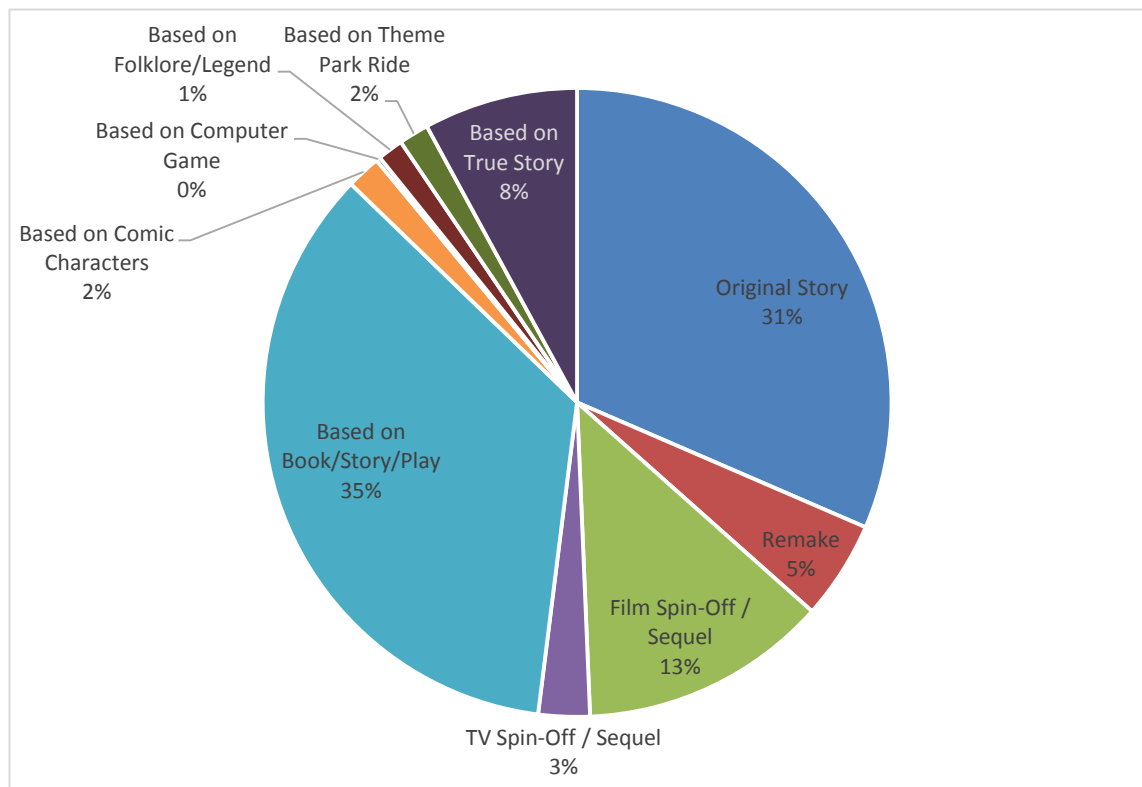
Figure 6: Sources for Disney film stories

Source: Analysis of data from IMDb.

5.2.1 Early Sequels & Remakes

The data in Figure 6 do not tell the whole story; some historical context is needed. In the 1930s, Walt Disney came under pressure from exhibitors, distributors and audiences to follow up the success of animated short *Three Little Pigs* (1933) with a sequel, but he was reluctant to do so, later noting that 'I've never believed in doing sequels. I didn't want to waste the time I have doing a sequel; I'd rather be using that time doing something new and different. It goes back to when they wanted me to do more pigs' (quoted in Smith, 2001, p.29). Nevertheless, by the end of the decade another three 'pigs' shorts had been produced, none of which achieved the same success as the original, rather proving Walt Disney's point.

Under Walt Disney's watch, the studio produced three feature film sequels. The first (the 63rd Disney film released) was *Son of Flubber* (1963b), following two years after *The Absent-Minded Professor* (1961a). The original film, which was nominated for three Oscars and 'made on a small budget, did fine business at the box office' (Smith, 2016, p.2), although that did not mean that a sequel was inevitable. The popular *Old Yeller* (1957), which scores 100% from critics on review-aggregator website RottenTomatoes.com, was followed a few years later[58] by the less well-received (aggregated critical rating: 40%) *Savage Sam* (1963a). Finally, the hero of *The Misadventures of Merlin Jones* (1964d) returned a year later in *The Monkey's Uncle* (1965a), and both starred Annette Funicello, breakout star of television's *The Mickey Mouse Club* (1955-1959). All six of these original films and their sequels featured Tommy Kirk[59], who starred in a total of 11 Disney films between 1957 and 1965, making him one of the most prolific recurring actors in the Disney film canon, along with Kurt Russell[60] and Dean Jones[61].

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[58] Despite the infamous ending of the original in which the rabid dog of the title is shot.

[59] Tommy Kirk also appeared in several television serials on both *The Mickey Mouse Show* and *Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color* (1961-1969), but has few roles of note on his post-Disney filmography. It is claimed that Walt Disney fired Kirk personally for engaging in a homosexual affair with another actor. See: https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2017/03/child-actors-gay-days-disney-cost-career/ [Accessed: 12th April 2017].

[60] Kurt Russell appeared in nine Disney films (and two television serials) between 1966 and 1975, and later voiced the fox in *The Fox and the Hound* (1981c). He returned to Disney for *Miracle* (2004d), *Sky High* (2005e), and Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* (2017c).

[61] Dean Jones starred in ten Disney films between 1965 and 1977, as well as several television films.

Between Walt Disney's death in 1966 and Michael Eisner's appointment as CEO in 1984, there were a further eight sequels. Three of these featured Herbie, the Volkswagen Beetle from the box office hit *The Love Bug* (1968b), who received another belated outing in *Herbie Fully Loaded* (2005b). In the late 1980s Disney produced an unusual pair of sequels, *Benji the Hunted* (1987) and *Return to Snowy River* (1988a), in the sense that the original films they followed were not released by Disney[62]. Presumably the reason for producing sequels to non-Disney films was to capitalise on the success of the originals, although neither sequel did particularly well financially or critically.
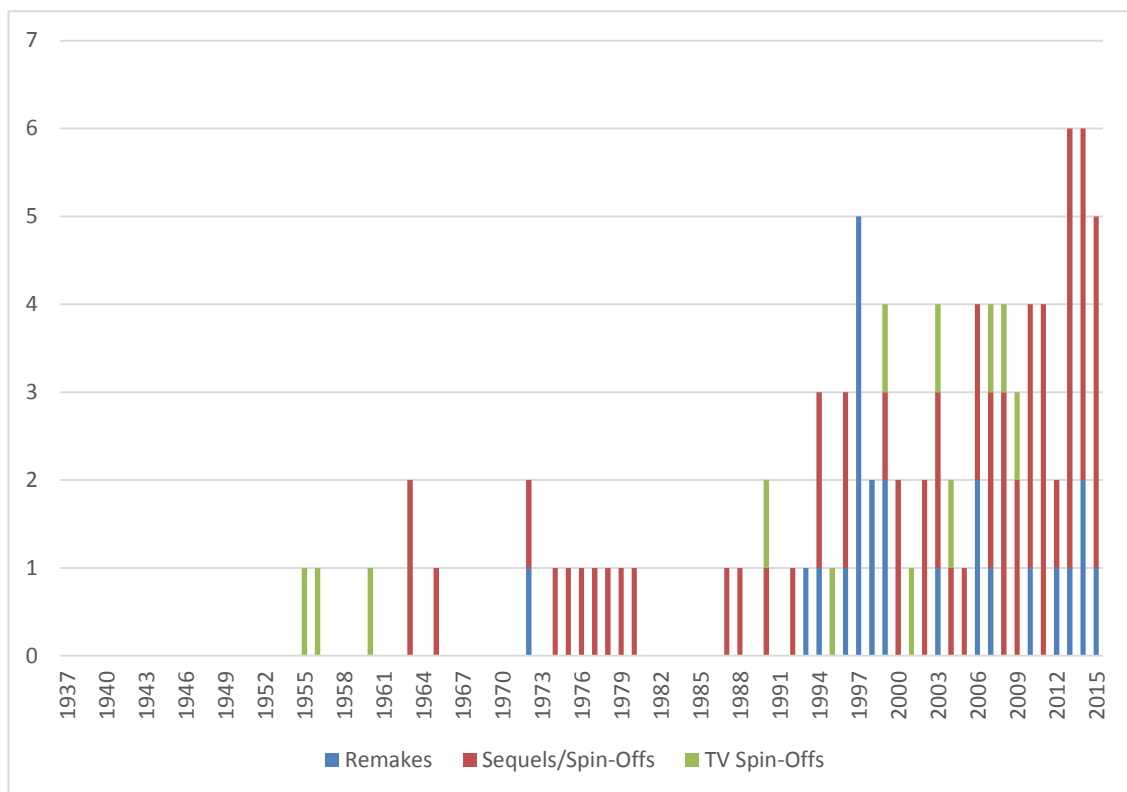
Figure 7: Disney's theatrical remakes, sequels and spin-offs

Source: Analysis of data drawn from IMDb.

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[62] *Benji the Hunted* was the only Disney-released entry in the Mulberry Square Releasing franchise that began with *Benji* (1974a). *Return to Snowy River* followed the Australian drama *The Man from Snowy River* (1982b), which had been distributed by Twentieth Century Fox.

5.2.2 Animated Sequels & Remakes

As can be seen in Figure 7, sequels and remakes were not a regular part of Disney's production slate until the 1990s. It was then that Disney began mining its animated features back catalogue for inspiration, producing its first feature-length animated sequel, *The Rescuers Down Under* (1990b), which followed *The Rescuers* (1977d). This sequel is often overlooked as it came right at the beginning of the Disney Renaissance, sandwiched between box office hits *The Little Mermaid* (1989c) and *Beauty and the Beast* (1991a).

The first animated feature to be remade in live-action[63] was *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* (1961d), which became *101 Dalmatians* (1996a) and spawned its own sequel, *102 Dalmatians* (2000a), while the 1961 original also received a direct-to-video animated sequel, *101 Dalmatians II: Patch's London Adventure* (2003a)[64]. Disney has released 28 sequels to animated features directly to video/DVD since 1994, along with around 50 other animated and live-action spin-offs and several original features[65]. Disney's direct-to-video output is beyond the scope of the present research, but it is worth noting that in 2006, mindful of criticisms concerning the quality of the animated sequels and the potential damage they represented to the Disney animation brand, John Lasseter, newly appointed as chief creative officer of Walt Disney Animation Studios (WDAS), cancelled all future direct-to-video animated sequels[66].

In recent years Disney has returned to its animated features as a source for live-action remakes, having struck gold with *Alice in Wonderland* (2010a). The Tim Burton-directed 3D fantasy picked up two Oscars and earned over $1 billion at the box office worldwide[67], only beaten to the 2010 box office top spot

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[63] Disney released a live-action version of *The Jungle Book* in 1994, however, this was not a remake of the 1967 animated original (as the 2016 version of the film was), but rather another (loose) adaptation of the book, hence its alternate title referencing the book's author: *Rudyard Kipling's The Jungle Book*.
[64] There was also an animated television series, *101 Dalmatians: The Series* (1997-1998).
[65] See Figure 4 in section 3.3.2 for details on numbers of films released directly to home media.
[66] Lasseter's approach to animated sequels can be gauged by the importance that Pixar Animation Studios (PAS, where he is also chief creative officer) places on story to drive its filmmaking, ensuring that sequels are not rushed out to please audiences. WDAS appears to be emulating PAS' emphasis on story with its approaches to up-coming sequels to *Wreck-It Ralph* (2012h) and *Frozen* (2013a), due in 2018 and 2019 respectively.
[67] It also gained some poor reviews, earning a Rotten Tomatoes aggregated rating of 52% (certified 'Rotten') from critics. See: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1221547_alice_in_wonderland [Accessed: 21st February 2017].

by another Disney sequel, *Toy Story 3* (2010f). With this success it should surprise nobody that Disney has continued to return to the live-action remake well, with *Maleficent* (2014h), a retelling of *Sleeping Beauty* (1959b) starring Angelina Jolie, and *Cinderella* (2015d), directed by Kenneth Branagh, released during the period of the census. Since then *The Jungle Book* (2016f), *Pete's Dragon* (2016i), and *Beauty and the Beast* (2017a) have been released, with remakes of *Aladdin*, *Dumbo*, *Peter Pan*, *Mulan*, *The Lion King* and others in various stages of (pre-)production. These big budget live-action remakes use modern digital technologies to tell stories that were previously only feasible in animation, often expanding on the original's stories, while deploying new takes on familiar songs and characters.

Disney's recycling of old material also has a less obvious legacy within some of its animated features. Character poses and sequences from older traditionally animated films have on occasion been recycled in later films, for example Baloo in *The Jungle Book* (1967c) and Little John in *Robin Hood* (1973a) not only share a voice actor (Phil Harris) but a physical resemble too. These recycled elements have been acknowledged and shared online in fan-made comparison videos (Movie Munchies, 2015a, Movie Munchies, 2015b).

5.2.3 Later Sequels & Remakes

Disney has not just remade films from its own back catalogue. Between 1996 and 1999 Disney released ten remakes out of a total of 30 films. While four – *101 Dalmatians (1996a)*, *Flubber* (1997c), *That Darn Cat* (1997h) and *The Parent Trap* (1998d) – were remakes of 1960s Disney films, the others drew upon non-Disney properties. *George of the Jungle* (1997d), *Inspector Gadget* (1999c), and *Mr. Magoo* (1997f) were all live-action adaptations of animated television series, while *My Favorite Martian* (1999d) was based on a live-action show[68]. *Mighty Joe Young* (1998b) remade the 1949 RKO Oscar winner and picked up its own Oscar nomination, while *Jungle 2 Jungle* (1997e) was an

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[68] The series that these films were based on were, respectively: ABC's *George of the Jungle* (1967a); DIC Entertainment's *Inspector Gadget* (1983-1986); UPA's series of Mr. Magoo theatrical shorts (1949-1959) and subsequent TV series; and CBS' *My Favorite Martian* (1963-1966).

English-language remake of *Un indien dans la ville* (1994f), a French film that was released in the US by Beuna Vista Pictures Distribution (BVPD) through the Touchstone label under the title *Little Indian, Big City* in 1996. Nine of these ten films received critical drubbings (*The Parent Trap* scored 86% on RottenTomatoes.com, the other films rated between 4% and 52%), although box office success was more mixed.

The relatively unspectacular success of the 1990s remakes perhaps explains why Disney avoided them until the mid-2000s, with a couple of critical canine misfires, *The Shaggy Dog* (2006e) and *Underdog* (2007g), before the success of *Alice in Wonderland* in 2010. Meanwhile, sequels and spin-offs continued to be produced in a steady trickle, with at least one per year since 1999.

The *Mighty Ducks* trilogy (1992-1996) and the *Santa Clause* trilogy (1994-2006) spun big profits from low budget comedies, while the two *National Treasures* films (2004-2007) married producer Jerry Bruckheimer's spectacle with Disney's storytelling, a relationship that blossomed with the unexpected success of *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* (2003g) and its four multi-billion dollar sequels (2006-2017)[69]. A Disney Chronicles of Narnia franchise stalled after two films[70], while sequels/reboots of cult favourites *Escape to Witch Mountain* (1975b), and *Tron* (1982e), *Race to Witch Mountain* (2009f), and *Tron: Legacy* (2010g), plus a prequel to MGM's *The Wizard of Oz* (1939)*, Oz the Great and Powerful* (2013e), failed to generate much enthusiasm from audiences and critics.

5.2.4 21st Century Franchises & Shared Universes

Disney has found most of its sequel success in its acquired studios, Pixar, Marvel and Lucasfilm, whose releases come with almost guaranteed, critic-

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[69] The Jerry Bruckheimer/Disney relationship, which also spanned Touchstone Pictures releases, almost ended with the box office failure of *The Lone Ranger* (2013c), a remake of the classic ABC series (1949-1957).

[70] A third Narnia film was produced, but without Disney's involvement, and there are rumours of further instalments still to come, as the potential of the franchise has not yet been fully realised.

proof[71] box office success. Disney's Marvel releases are connected within an over-arching Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), so that while every film may not be a direct sequel to another, events in one film may have an impact on other films in the MCU. *The Avengers* (2012b) was the first Marvel Studios and MCU film released by Disney since their acquisition of Marvel in 2009. The film drew together characters (and cast) from the non-Disney films *Iron Man* (2008g), *The Incredible Hulk* (2008f), *Iron Man 2* (2010c), *Thor* (2011d) and *Captain America: The First Avenger* (2011a) as 'Phase 1' of the MCU. Disney has continued to expand the MCU with 'Phase 2', spanning another six films[72], and 'Phase 3', which began in 2016. The MCU also extends to direct-to-DVD shorts (known as Marvel One-Shots) and the television series *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* (2013-) and *Agent Carter* (2015-2016)[73].

The MCU has provided Disney with a chance to super-size their synergy in new ways, especially as Marvel brought with it a vast back catalogue of comic characters (and existing audiences) to exploit across film franchises, tie-in comic books, theme parks, merchandise, television shows, and more. Similarly, Disney's purchase of Lucasfilm, the studio behind the Star Wars franchise, has allowed the company to exploit and expand a series with guaranteed box office and audience recognition. *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015k) was the first Star Wars film produced by Disney (and the only one in the census), representing Episode VII of a saga that began with Episodes IV-VI (1977-1983) and 'continued' with Episodes I-III (1999-2005). Since the census *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (2016k) has been released, the first live-action cinematic spin-off from the main Star Wars saga. Disney has announced plans to continue the main saga with Episodes XIII and IX due in 2017 and 2019. These releases will alternate with more stand-alone 'Star Wars Stories' set within the same shared universe, emulating the successful MCU.

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[71] By which I mean that bad critical reviews do not deter audiences from flocking to cinemas – see also the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise.

[72] MCU Phase 2 films: *Iron Man 3* (2013b), *Thor: The Dark World* (2013i), *Captain America: The Winter Solder* (2014c), *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014d), *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015c) and *Ant-Man* (2015b).

[73] Other television series produced by Disney and Netflix, and released on the streaming platform, including *Daredevil* (2015--a), *Jessica Jones* (2015--b), *Luke Cage* (2016-), and *Iron Fist* (2017--b), also share cast/characters and are set in the MCU. To date these series have not crossed over with the theatrically released features, but the characters have teamed up in *The Defenders* (2017--a).

The MCU and Star Wars franchises demonstrate how sequels and spin-offs have become integral to Disney's filmmaking future, and to Hollywood as a whole, with studios such as Paramount looking to replicate Disney's success (Sweney, 2017b). Warner Bros. is attempting to unite Batman, Superman, and other DC Comics characters into a DC Extended Universe, beginning with *Man of Steel* (2013d), while Universal announced their own 'Universal Monsters' shared universe before the first film of the franchise, *The Mummy* (2017e), was released. It remains to be seen whether and when audiences will tire of cinematic universe building, but both high box office returns and positive critical responses seem to indicate that they will be around for a while longer, especially with the likes of *Deadpool* (2016c) and *Logan* (2017d) bringing fresh perspectives to the superhero genre[74].

5.2.5 Repackaged Content

Another small group of Disney films that lack originality, aside from sequels, remakes and franchises are those that have repackaged existing material into new feature films. Disney's first such film actually predates *Snow White*, when in May 1937 Disney tested cinema audiences' willingness to endure feature length animation by compiling five Oscar-winning Silly Symphonies shorts into a feature. Omitted from most Disney histories, the release of the *Academy Award*

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[74] *Deadpool* and *Logan* feature characters from the X-Men comic books and film universe. The X-Men are Marvel characters, licenced to 20th Century Fox, thus Disney has no involvement in the production of these 15 certificate films. However, this distinction is not always understood by audiences, as evidenced by comments made by a contributor to my sample survey questionnaire, who wrote:

> I must say that I was initially surprised that Disney would allow Marvel to finance, create and promote an R-rated film. However, aside from the gratuitous violence and horror themes, I felt that it fell within the typical Disney-funded fare: *Deadpool*'s pansexuality was all but invisible, it remained significantly America-centric (unlike other Marvel films, I don't recall it even bothering to move the story beyond the US borders), and so on. Because I walked into the film with knowledge of Disney's involvement and the R-rating at the forefront of my mind I remained critical of the film's content throughout watching, which led me to discuss it in quite critical terms with friends after the film (much to their chagrin). Most of my friends had forgotten that is was a 'Disney' film, and objected to my discussion of its genericness: they didn't expect it to push boundaries, even though as an R-rated Disney film it was in precisely the right position to do so (F, 25-34, Australian).

The mistaken belief that *Deadpool* was a Disney/Marvel produced film was also repeated by participants in the two pilot focus groups that I conducted.

Review of Walt Disney Cartoons (1937a)[75] 'was complimented [sic] with an elaborate advertising campaign aimed at educating audiences as well as theatre owners about the significance of cartoons' (Diffrient, 2006, p.507). A footnote in the history of Disney films, it is not considered part of the Disney film canon, as listed in *Disney A to Z* (Smith, 2016, pp.268-277), but then neither are the 14 shorts compilations that were released by RKO in 1953 before their distribution contract with Disney ended[76]. These shorts compilations are also not part of the 390 films that make up the Disney film census.

In 1955 Disney managed to 'charge money for an attraction that had already been seen free by ninety million people' (Thomas, 1994, p.258) by editing three episodes of the *Disneyland* (1954-1958) television series into *Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier* (1955a), a feat repeated a year later with *Davy Crockett and the River Pirates* (1956a). Not only were the initial trio of Davy Crockett episodes wildly and unexpectedly popular with young audiences across the US, but they were originally broadcast in black and white – with an eye on future repeat broadcasts, Walt Disney had the foresight to film *Disneyland* episodes in colour. Therefore the film versions of *Davy Crockett* were not only blown up to cinema screen proportions, but offered the novelty of colour too.

Similarly, *The Sign of Zorro* (1958b), originally released in Japan, and in the US in 1960, edited together five episodes of *Zorro* (1957-1959), Disney's ABC television series. Unlike *Davy Crockett*, the series and thus the subsequent feature was filmed in black and white, making the film one of only 5½ Disney films not initially released in colour[77]. Disney released several

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[75] Although the film is listed as *Academy Award Review of Walt Disney Cartoons* by both IMDb and *Disney A to Z: The Official Encyclopedia* (2016), posters from the film's advertising campaign show the title as *Walt Disney's Academy Awards Revue*. The film was re-released in 1966 with an additional four shorts, later released on Laserdisc in Japan in 1985, and on VHS in the UK in 1993. See: http://disney.wikia.com/wiki/Academy_Award_Review_of_Walt_Disney_Cartoons [Accessed: 14th February 2017].

[76] Mention should also be made of *Music Land* (1955c), a theatrical feature released by RKO and then rarely seen again, which was edited from individual elements taken from the package features *Make Mine Music* (1946a) and *Melody Time* (1948).

[77] *The Sign of Zorro* (1958b), *The Shaggy Dog* (1959a), *The Absent-Minded Professor* (1961a), *Son of Flubber* (1963b) and *Frankenweenie* (2012e) were all initially released in black and white. *The Reluctant Dragon* (1941b) begins in black and white and changes to Technicolor partway through the feature. The earlier films have been colourised for television/home media, with varying results. *Frankenweenie* was deliberately filmed in monochrome to add to the effect of this stop-motion horror/B-movie homage.

episodes of the *Disneyland* anthology TV series and its successors as featurettes and features internationally, and several feature-length compilations of theatrical shorts have also been released internationally, but none of these films have been included in the census.

In the 1970s Disney released their final two theatrically-released compilations. *The Best of Walt Disney's True-Life Adventures* (1975a) edited together clips from 13 of the *True-Life Adventures* series of nature documentaries that were originally released between 1948 and 1960. *The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh* (1977b) brought together three existing theatrical shorts[78], and framed them with new animation to create a new episodic but coherent narrative feature.

The five compilations discussed above are a minor part of the Disney film census, however, it is worth mentioning them as they possibly influenced a later trend, that began with *Gargoyles the Movie: The Heroes Awaken* (1995b), of releasing features compiled from episodes of Disney's animated television series. Such films have found a home on video and DVD, where modern audiences are perhaps more willing to watch such repackaged content, rather than in the cinema.

5.3 Re-releases

The Tangible Disney Genre is influenced by the 390 films of the census, but not every film is treated equally by Disney, either during or following its initial theatrical release. Not every Disney film is widely released across the US or internationally, for example, the Disneynature documentaries receive limited releases and are practically unheard of in the UK. A handful of films, such as *Fantasia* (1940a), have received 'roadshow' releases, where they were rolled out slowly across the US in key cities, a practice that has more-or-less disappeared today, although *Fantasia/2000* (1999a) premiered in IMAX cinemas prior to a regular theatrical release.

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[78] *Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree* (1966b), *Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day* (1968c), and *Winnie the Pooh and Tigger Too* (1974b).

Many people do not encounter Disney films in the cinema but on home media, television or streaming services. This is particularly the case with films as old as *Snow White*, celebrating its 80th anniversary in 2017, although such classics have been re-released into cinemas over the years. The ways in which Disney curates its back catalogue demonstrates Disney's manipulation of its brand, and thus has the potential to influence not only the TDG but the FDG as well, since audiences can only draw on their experiences of the films that they are exposed to. Figure 8 shows the percentage of the 390 Disney films that Disney has re-issued theatrically and on physical home media. In the following section I consider the films and formats that Disney chooses to re-release, and the impact that these choices may have on the TDG and FDG.
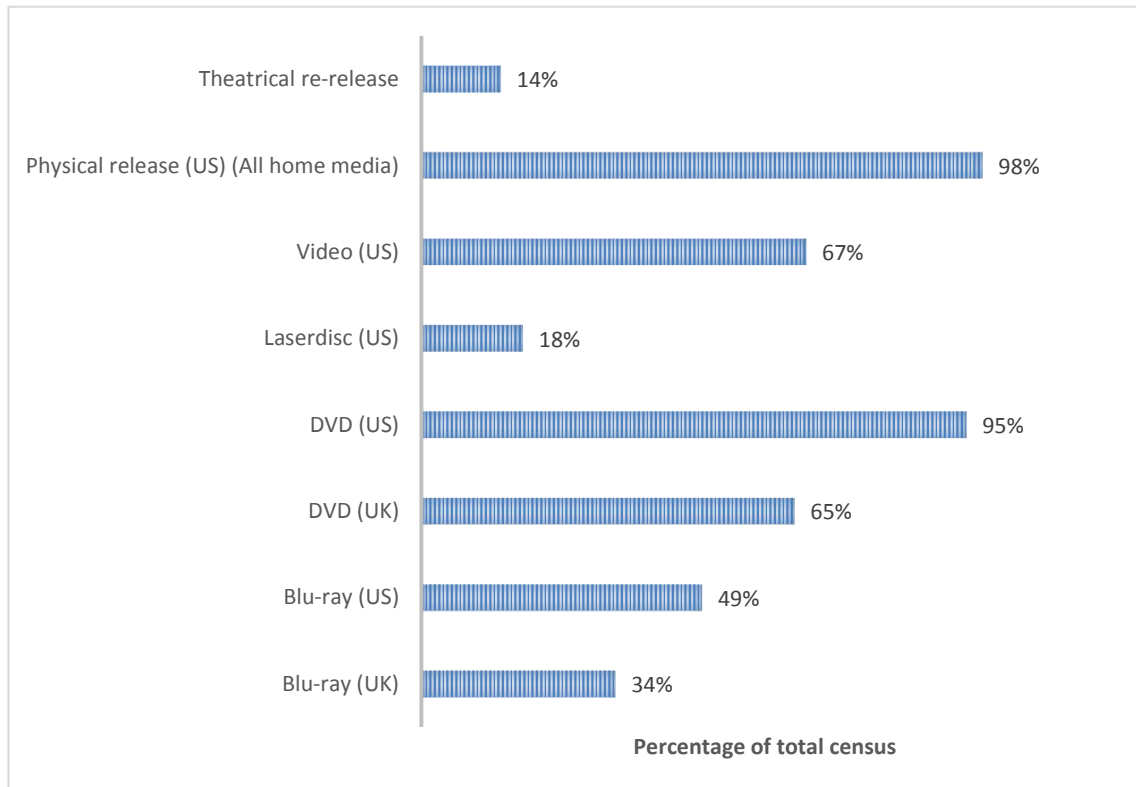
Figure 8: Theatrical and physical (re)release formats of Disney films

Source: Analysis of statistical data drawn from various online sources.

5.3.1 Theatrical Releases

As noted in section 3.2, all of the 390 films in the Disney census have been released theatrically in the US, although some had only very limited releases, either because they were produced primarily for international markets (*Barfi!* (2012c), *Khoobsurat* (2014f) and others were released in conjunction with UTV Motion Pictures, an Indian film company in which WDC holds a controlling interest), or for awards consideration prior to a DVD release (such as the Tinker Bell series (2008-2015)).

5% of Disney films have been released in the IMAX format, while 11% have been released in Disney Digital 3D[79] (some were shown in both formats). These figures include films that were originally released in these formats, and those, like *The Lion King* and *Toy Story*, which were later adapted into 3D for theatrical and Blu-ray re-releases. *Snow White* was one of the first Disney films to be re-released theatrically accompanied by a new advertising campaign in 1944, and then again on a further seven occasions, a re-release record beaten only by *Fantasia*, which was re-issued to cinemas eleven times between 1944 and 1990.

Disney tended to re-release its classic animated films, as well as the most popular live-action features, every seven years or so, to reach new generations of children. Such re-releases meant that films that had been successful critically but not necessarily financially (such as *Dumbo* (1941a) and *Bambi* (1942a), released when European markets were closed off by war) were able to turn a profit. It also meant that revenues could be easily generated without the expense of producing a brand new film. In the days before television and home media, cinema re-releases were the only way to see older films. Disney's generational re-release pattern gave rise to the concept of the 'Disney Vault', which continues to this day via home media, whereby certain films are only released on video/DVD/Blu-ray/streaming for a limited time before being taken off sale.

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[79] It is unclear what the difference between 'Disney Digital 3D' and regular 3D is, but it follows Disney's tendency to explicitly append their own name to media, such as 'Disney DVD' or 'Disney Blu-ray'.

For its 1982 re-release, *Fantasia* was given a newly recorded stereo soundtrack and narration, but the original film was fully restored for the 1990 release (Smith, 2016, p.263). *Fantasia* also suffered edited running times on some re-releases, as did *Follow Me, Boys!* (1966a), *The Happiest Millionaire* (1967b), *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (1971), and *Pete's Dragon* (1977c)[80]. These films were all initially released in cuts surpassing two hours, which was perhaps deemed too long for films supposedly aimed at family (child) audiences. Figure 9 (overleaf) shows the average lengths of Disney films for every year between 1937 and 2015. The running times in the key show the average film length in that category.

Data scientist Randal S. Olson (2014) has drawn statistics from IMDb to show that, contrary to popular belief, films are not, on average, much longer than they used to be, although recent films are longer than they were in the 1980s. My data for Disney films seems to contradict Olson's industry-wide conclusion, suggesting that Disney films have indeed been getting longer, especially since the turn of the 21st century.

Dividing the Disney films by studio and medium shows that Marvel and Star Wars films are significantly longer on average than live-action films from other Disney studios, while Pixar animations are longer than their Disney counterparts. It could be inferred that Marvel and Star Wars films, with their longer running times and PG-13/12A certificates, are targeting older audiences with longer attention spans than the animations. The shorter average running times of Disney live-action films also speaks to a greater variety of films produced compared to the output of Marvel or Pixar. Live-action Disney films

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[80] The edited versions of these films sometimes appear on home media releases, which can cause frustration for fans and collectors (myself included). *Fantasia* was initially released in a roadshow cut of 125 mins, cut to 81 mins for its 1941 release, and eventually restored to its original length for later theatrical and home media releases. *Follow Me, Boys!* was cut from 131 to 107 mins for a 1976 release and 1984 video, but restored to 131 mins for the US DVD. *The Happiest Millionaire* premiered at 159 mins, then was cut to 144 and subsequently 120 mins when the film underperformed. The 2004 DVD features an even longer, 172 min cut, with overture and additional scenes. *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* was initially released at 117 mins, but cut to 98 mins for a 1979 reissue, and for the 2001/2009 US DVD releases, additional footage was inserted to increase the running time to 139 mins – the 2014 US Blu-ray reverted to the 117 min cut, with the additional footage available as a bonus feature. Finally, *Pete's Dragon* was cut from 135 to 129 mins during initial release, and later to 106 mins for a 1984 reissue. US/UK DVDs released in 2001 and 2009 feature the 129 min cut, while the 2013 UK Blu-ray release is 106 mins, and the US 2012 Blu-ray is 129 mins!

range from *Roving Mars* (2006d), a 40 minute IMAX documentary at one extreme, to the epic *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End* (2007d) at the other, Disney's longest film to date at 169 minutes.
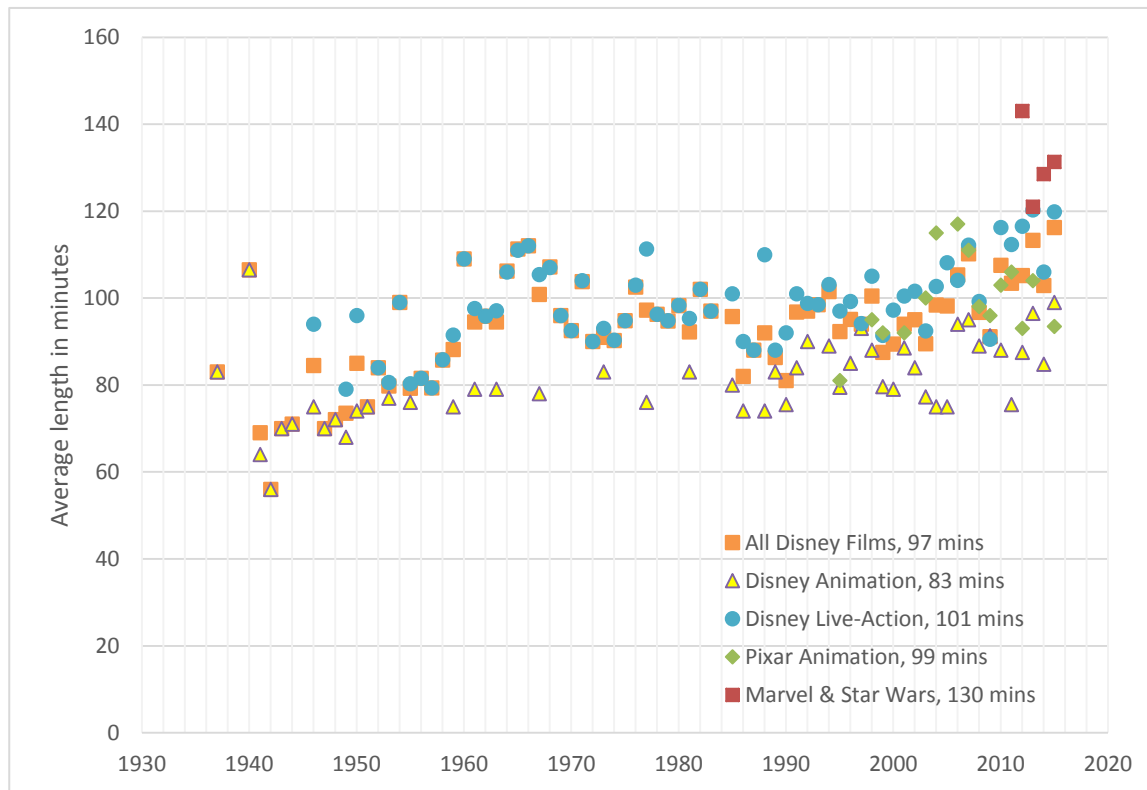
Figure 9: Average lengths of Disney films by category, 1937-2015

Source: Data collated from IMDb.

5.3.2 Physical Home Media

When VCRs were introduced to the marketplace in the 1970s, Disney was among the Hollywood studios 'concerned over a technology that eroded their ability to release and withdraw products from the market' (Wasser, 2001, p.84) for maximum financial rewards. In fact, Disney acted as co-plaintiff against Sony's VCR, but the US Supreme Court eventually determined that public use of such technology represented fair use, and media coverage of the case contributed to 'much of the formative public awareness of home video' (Hilderbrand, 2009, p.18). As a result of these legal developments, 'Disney was

very hesitant about releasing its classic animated films on video' (Wasser, 2001, p.111)

However, in the late 1980s, *Pinocchio* (1940b) was finally released on VHS. After a price reduction from $79.95 to $29.95 and a $7 million marketing campaign, '*Pinocchio* sold out its 1.7 million units' (Stewart, 2005, p.92) which generated a substantial profit. It has been observed that, 'ironically, it is the rise of home video that turned Disney into a major studio' (Decherney, 2012, p.171) since revenue from sales of re-released films funded the creation of *The Little Mermaid* (1989c), which kick-started the Disney Renaissance of the 1990s. Since then Disney have released 98% of their film output to physical home media, including VHS, laserdisc, DVD and Blu-ray (see Figure 8 above). Before Disney stopped releasing films to VHS in 2006, 94% of their 295 films up to that point had been released on the format, with a further 18% on the laserdisc format.

Laserdisc was a precursor to DVD that could hold more content than just a film. Supplemental features such as filmmaker commentaries, deleted scenes and artwork galleries appear on the laserdisc, DVD and Blu-ray releases of many, but not all, Disney films. As of April 2017, 95% of the 390 Disney films contained in the census had been released on DVD in the US, with just 65% available on the format in the UK. Two Disney films from the census have not been released in any format, physical or digital, in the US: *Roadside Romeo* (2008i), Disney's first co-production in India[81], which also had a limited US theatrical release (Smith, 2016, p.643); and *Song of the South* (1946b), the most infamous Disney film of them all.

Much has already been written about *Song of the South* – Jim Korkis takes an unsanctioned Disney historian's view in *Who's Afraid of the Song of the South? And Other Forbidden Disney Stories* (2012), while Jason Sperb's

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[81] *Roadside Romeo* has been released on DVD in India. Four further Indian co-productions, *Arjun: The Warrior Prince* (2012a), *Barfi!* (2012c), *Khoobsurat* (2014f) and *ABCD 2* (2015a) have not been released on physical media, but are available on iTunes in the US (or on imported Indian DVDs). Several other Indian and Chinese co-productions were released to the short-lived Disney World Cinema (2009-2011) DVD series. Co-productions in other countries, such as Germany's *Hexe Lilli: Der Drache und das magische Buch* (2009c), Russia's *Kniga Masterov* (2009d), and the Mexican, Brazilian and Argentinian versions of *High School Musical* (2006c) remain unreleased in the US in any format, and are (literal) footnotes to Disney's film output.

Disney's Most Notorious Film: Race, Convergence, and the Hidden Histories of Song of the South (2013) has a more academic approach. Following its last theatrical release in 1986, and VHS releases in the UK and Japan, 'the Walt Disney Company determined that *Song of the South* isn't appropriate for a modern day audience and it no longer re-issues the film' (Maltin, 2016, p.351). The film's questionable relationship with race, as well as the mythology that has built up around the film, which will only grow as long as it remains unreleased and unseen, make it the most awkward film in Disney's back catalogue. It could be argued that a film does not exist unless it is seen by an audience, so by withholding *Song of the South* from audiences perhaps Disney hopes to write the film out of its history.

I have a copy of the film on British VHS, but it is generally hard to get hold of by legal means (or even on YouTube). Other racially insensitive films such as *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) are available on home media for public consumption, but of course such films do not carry the family-friendly Disney name. Disney has released some contentious materials on DVD, however, such as animated WW2 propaganda shorts featuring Japanese and German stereotypes, as well as early Mickey Mouse and Silly Symphonies shorts with caricatured black characters. These shorts have been released as part of the Walt Disney Treasures (WDT) DVD series (2001-2009), where the most potentially offensive materials were grouped under the heading 'From the Vault'. Such materials were accompanied by introductions from film critic Leonard Maltin, who framed the historical context of the shorts.

Released in limited quantities, the 30 double-DVD sets of the WDT series collected almost all of Disney's classic animated shorts, along with episodes of *The Mickey Mouse Club*, *Disneyland*, and *Zorro*, and films *The Reluctant Dragon* (1941b)[82], *Victory Through Air Power* (1943)[83] and *The Hand*

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[82] *The Reluctant Dragon* was released in full for the first time on *WDT: Behind the Scenes at the Walt Disney Studios* (2002). The film appeared again in full as a bonus feature on a 2014 US Blu-ray release that combined the films *Fun and Fancy Free* (1947) & *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad* (1949). It is not available on streaming platforms.

[83] *Victory Through Air Power*, a curious piece of wartime propaganda, had its only US release (physical or digital) to date on *WDT: On the Front Lines* (2004) alongside Disney's WW2 shorts.

Behind the Mouse: The Ub Iwerks Story (1999b)[84]. With their limited edition status and contextual supplemental features, these sets were clearly aimed at adult fans and collectors, and they are indicative of the way that Disney targets home media to adult audiences. A WDT instalment would have been an ideal opportunity for Disney to put out a restored version of *Song of the South* on DVD in limited quantities for collectors to enjoy with as many warnings about context as deemed necessary for adult consumers. Unfortunately the reputation of the film has become so toxic that any future release looks more and more unlikely, particularly given the current state of US race relations[85].

Alongside the WDT collection, in 2006 Disney released a further four double-DVD volumes in the US under the title *Walt Disney's Legacy Collection*. These contained the seven shorts and seven features of the True-Life Adventures series, Oscar-winning natural history documentaries released between 1948 and 1960, and precursors to the Disneynature documentary strand that launched in 2009. Another limited edition collection, this was the only physical release of many of these films, although all are available on digital platforms. Other US-only release formats include: the Disney Movie Club, whose members get access to certain films as Disney Movie Club Exclusive DVD and Blu-rays; and the Disney Generations Collection, a short-lived DVD-on-demand service through Amazon.com that mainly covered television movies.

This careful curation of films on physical media can make life more difficult for Disney film collectors (especially those like me in the UK), and puts many titles out of reach of the casual Disney or film fan. However, thanks to eBay and Amazon Marketplace, most Disney films are available second-hand if they are no longer on general release. It is also notable that Disney Blu-ray

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[84] This documentary about the artist who first drew Mickey Mouse appeared on *WDT: The Adventures of Oswald the Lucky Rabbit* (2007). It is also available in various digital formats.

[85] It is notable that Disney's favoured film historian, Leonard Maltin, who instigated the WDT series and presented every release, also wrote the entry for *Song of the South* in *The Walt Disney Film Archives: The Animated Movies 1921-1968* (Kothenschulte, 2016). The book features essays on every Disney film containing animation up to 1968, and is filled with film stills and pre-production artwork from the Disney archives. It would have been a glaring omission to skip *Song of the South* in such a volume, and this is one of the rare occasions that a book approved by Disney has included commentary on the film. Maltin refers to the controversy surrounding the film, as well as commenting on his own positive childhood relationship with it, and the skill of the artists involved in its production. This literally weighty tome retails at £135 RRP and is therefore clearly for (affluent) adult enthusiasts.

releases in recent years have been multi-region[86], making US releases playable on British machines, for example, so British fans can obtain films that have not been released on that format locally.

5.3.3 Animated Classics

A significant way in which Disney curates its back catalogue of films is through the labelling of certain of its animated films as 'Classics'. This does not refer to the Classic Disney discussed by Janet Wasko (see section 3.1), but is a label used by Disney to market certain animated films. Disney's animated Classics covered in the census run from *Snow White* to *Big Hero 6* (2014b), the 54th entry in the series[87]. These Classics do not include every Disney animated feature, but instead represent those films produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios (and its earlier incarnations), rather than features produced by Disneytoon Studios or Walt Disney Television Animation, whose output is generally restricted to spin-offs with a lower quality of animation.

Branding the films as 'Disney Classics' created a collectability across the films, on video, DVD and later Blu-ray, particularly when Disney began numbering the spines of its releases (in the UK at least). The collectible nature was reinforced in the UK in 2014 when the entire Classics collection was re-released on DVD and Blu-ray in limited edition cardboard sleeves featuring new artwork and an emphasis on the numbering of each Classic. Disney Classics are regularly promoted with 'Buy One Get One Free' (BOGOF) offers, and often come bundled with sequels and spin-off films.

Within the Disney Classics canon some films are treated as more special than others. For example, there are five Classics that have yet to appear in Blu-ray format, and many do not have any extra features on their discs. At the other end of the scale are the twelve or so films that are released for limited periods

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[86] Just as DVDs are released with region coding (region 1 covers US, region 2 includes Europe and Japan), Blu-rays are region A (includes US), B (includes Europe), or C (includes central Asia). Most Disney Blu-rays released in the UK and US in recent years are region ABC, playable in all territories.
[87] The numbering of the Disney Classics differs between the UK and the US, with *The Wild* (2006f) counted as a Classic in the UK but not the US, while *Dinosaur* (2000b) and *Winnie the Pooh* (2011f) are counted in the US but not in the UK. *The Wild* was not actually animated by Walt Disney Animation Studios. Oddly, *Song of the South* was branded a Classic on its UK VHS release.

before being withdrawn in Diamond Editions, Platinum Editions and recent (US-only) Signature Editions – each edition comes with novel features such as 'newly' discovered deleted scenes, documentaries connected to stage musicals, or merely a new cardboard sleeve. All of this in a ploy to have fans purchase the films again and again.

Figure 10: Disney DVDs for sale in HMV, Leeds, 09/01/15

Source: Photo taken by author with permission from HMV store manager.

The Disney Classics branding gives greater visibility to Disney's animated output. In combination with the Disney Princess brand (launched by Disney in 2005 to promote merchandise based on a selection of animated princesses), the abundance of merchandise, and the characters that appear in Disney theme parks it is unsurprising that Disney is known first and foremost for its animated films. Furthermore, the positioning of Disney films on DVD/Blu-ray in stores such as HMV reinforces the association of Disney with children, as evidenced in Figure 10. The Disney section is found within the 'Kids' section of

the store, with animated films outnumbering live-action films on the shelves. The fact that there is a Disney section and not a Warner Bros. or Paramount section, for example, further indicates that the studio acts as a genre alongside Comedy, Sci-Fi and Drama within such stores in ways that rival studios do not.

5.3.4 Digital Platforms

While Disney continues to run BOGOF promotions for its physical releases, DVD and Blu-ray sales are generally on the decline, while digital platforms proliferate. Figure 11 (opposite) illustrates the percentages of Disney films available on popular platforms, including iTunes and Amazon Instant Video. Also included is Vudu, a platform that allows access to digital content from various other sources, including Google Play and Disney Movies Anywhere, which makes Disney films playable across various devices. Films available to rent and buy via Disney Movies Anywhere also occasionally feature extra material, not available on physical home media releases. Just as physical releases are displayed in the 'Kids' section of HMV, iTunes and Amazon associate the majority of Disney films with 'Kids & Family' labels.

In the UK, DisneyLife (http://disneylife.com) launched in 2015, presenting a one-stop shop for Disney films, TV shows, music, books and other content for a subscription of £4.99 per month[88]. Advertising for this service shows children being kept quiet with DisneyLife on an iPad on car journeys, and the content seems geared towards younger audiences, although more adult-oriented Touchstone films are available. Disney recently announced that it would be withdrawing its films from Netflix in the US to launch their own streaming service (Sweney, 2017a), which may possibly follow the UK DisneyLife model.

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[88] DisneyLife launched at a cost of £9.99 per month. I have not signed up to the service as I already own all of the Disney films available on physical media.
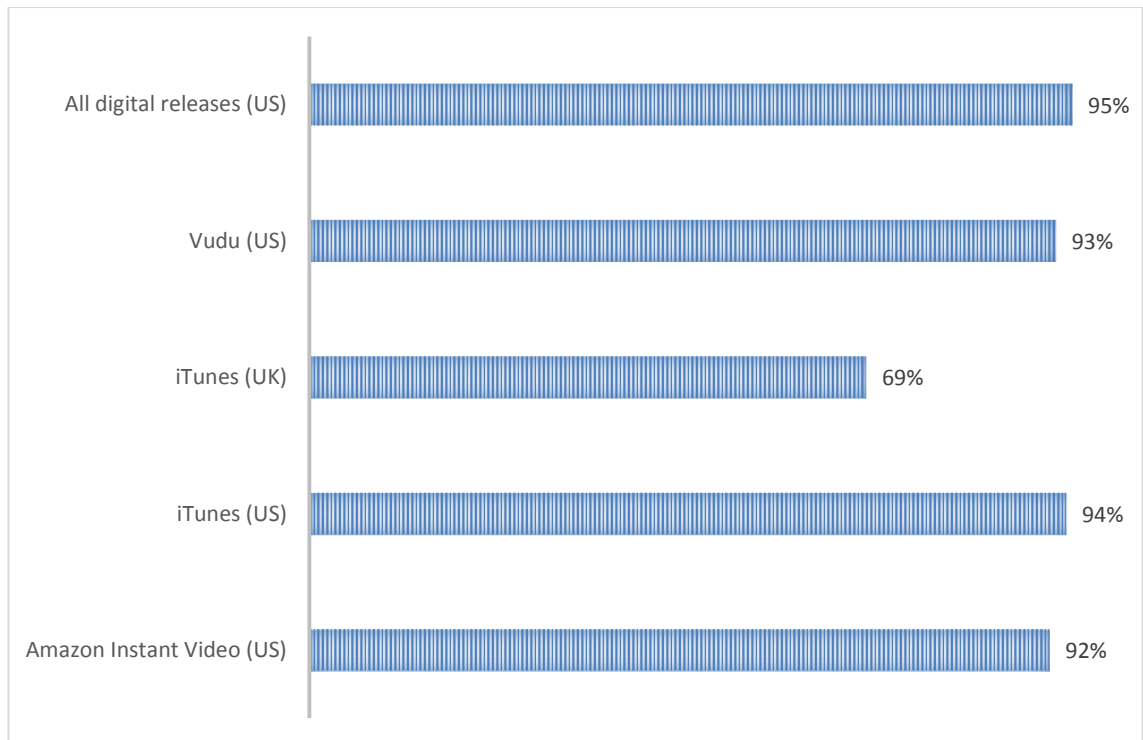
Figure 11: Disney film availability on digital platforms (at April 2017)

Source: Data drawn from author's own research.

There are still a handful of films missing from digital services, including *Song of the South* and *Roadside Romeo*, but also *The Light in the Forest* (1958a) and *Run, Cougar, Run* (1972f), films which were once available on VHS but have not been re-released either to physical or digital formats since, although both can be found on YouTube. Other anomalies include *The Sign of Zorro* (1958b) and *The Best of Walt Disney's True-Life Adventures* (1975a), which are only available on digital platforms, not on DVD, as well as *One of Our Dinosaurs is Missing* (1975c) and *Meet the Deedles* (1998a), which are available digitally and on DVD in the UK, but only on digital platforms in their native US. No obvious explanation is available for the curious release patterns of these six titles.

5.3.5 Television

> I used to watch the compilation shows on BBC TV as a kid, I
> particularly remember one being presented by Kenny Everett.
> We (my sister and I) videoed them and would watch them again
> and again to learn the words of the songs. (F, 35-44, British)

Many people encounter Disney films via television, either on free-to-air channels or paid subscription services. The British TV show *Disney Time* (1964-1994), which my respondent remembers in the quote above, aired as part of the BBC1 television schedules at Christmas, Easter and other Bank Holidays for several decades. It featured clips from newly released and classic Disney films, and was the only way that audiences might encounter many Disney films before the advent of home media.

In the US, the anthology series *Disneyland* (1954-1958) and its successors aired Disney films in full or in parts, beginning with a truncated *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) in 1954. *Disneyland* presented a platform for previewing and going behind the scenes of up-coming releases as well as airing less successful features. The most prestigious pictures, like *Snow White* and *Fantasia*, did not air, but animated films were as likely to be shown as live-action films.

Through Sky TV, British audiences can access Disney's own channels (Disney Channel, Disney XD and Disney Junior) as well as movie channel Sky Cinema Disney. In contrast, Disney films do not often appear on terrestrial TV channels outside of Christmas and Bank Holiday schedules, when they often air at prime time, reinforcing the notion of family viewing at these times of holiday and celebration.

Using four issues of the *Radio Times*[89] covering a randomly chosen month from 15th October to 11th November 2016 I identified all Disney films aired on the channels covered by the magazine. 116 different Disney films were aired over this 28 day period, and including repeat screenings there were 643 chances to watch a Disney film[90]. Of these 116 films, just nine were shown on

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[89] *Radio Times* issues dated 15-21 Oct 2016, 22-28 Oct 2016, 29 Oct-4 Nov 2016, and 5-11 Nov 2016.
[90] There were a further 16 films aired on 33 occasions that fall outside of this research's definition of Disney film, including films originally released directly to home media.

free-to-air channels including BBC1, BBC2, Channel 4, Film4 and 5 Star, while one was shown on Comedy Central (twice), and the other 107 were shown across a number of Sky Cinema (SC) channels.

The most frequently aired films in this period were *Ant-Man* (2015b) and *The Good Dinosaur* (2015f), which each had 17 chances of being seen. *Ant-Man* aired on SC Action & Adventure, SC Hits and SC Sci-Fi & Horror but not on SC Disney, in keeping with other Marvel and Star Wars films. *The Good Dinosaur* aired on SC Disney, but mostly on SC Pixar – the SC Family channel was rebranded as SC Pixar from 24th October to 6th November 2016, covering school half term.

There is evidence of curation in this sample, although whether this is through Sky's own scheduling choices or the films that Disney makes available to the channels is unknown. For example, every film from the 2015 case study aired on multiple occasions, except *Monkey Kingdom*, which did not air once. *Brave* (2012d) was the only Pixar production notable by its complete absence, despite a dedicated Pixar channel, while *Toy Story* (1995g) aired just once, compared with over ten outings each for its two sequels.

Over the 28 day period, of the 116 different Disney films aired, 40% were animated, and 60% were live-action, however of the 643 opportunities to watch a Disney film the numbers are reversed, with 60% of the Disney films broadcast being animated, and 40% live-action – animated films were more likely to be repeated. Due to the need to fill 24 hours of schedules, SC Disney and other SC channels often repeat their broadcast slates from morning to evening, so films are aired twice in one day. However, to see lesser known live-action Disney films such as *Now You See Him, Now You Don't* (1972e), *Greyfriars Bobby* (1961c) or *First Kid* (1996b) in their single outings in this period you would have needed to either stay up late or set an early alarm[91]. Conversely, while *National Treasure* (2004e) aired once on BBC2, *National Treasure: Book of Secrets* (2007c) was inexplicably available on eight different days (11 airings) on SC Disney and SC Hits, a frequency disproportionate to its box office and critical popularity.

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[91] These three films aired at 3:40am, 2:50am and 3:05am/1:00am (two airings) respectively.

Having considered the ways in which Disney films are available on television, it should also be noted that, when respondents to my questionnaire were asked how often they watched films in general (not restricted to Disney films) on different formats, television was not as prevalent as streaming, physical home media or cinema, as shown in Figure 12. Thus while there may be many options available to audiences for viewing films, television broadcasts are not the primary means by which they access such entertainment. But if they do encounter Disney films on television, this case study shows that they are more likely to come across an animated film, which may influence how they conceive of the FDG, putting it at odds with the TDG.
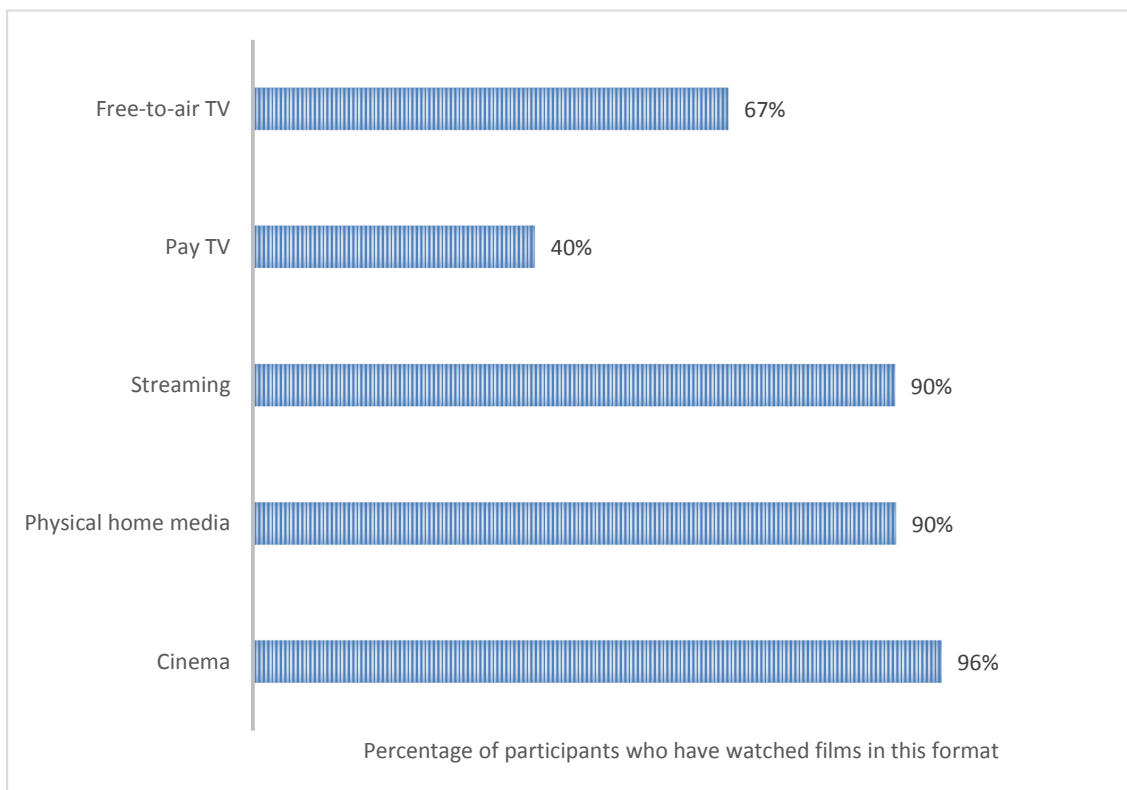
Figure 12: How survey respondents watch films (Question 14)[92]

Source: Sample survey data.

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[92] Respondents were asked how often they watched films in the ways listed and could select one response for each option. The data here collates instances where respondents said that they had come into contact with that method of film delivery 'on a daily basis', 'at least once a week', 'at least once a month' or 'less than once a month'. Not included are responses marked 'never' or 'don't know'.

5.3.6 In-flight Entertainment

In my questionnaire I asked respondents where they had seen certain Disney films that had been released in 2015 (Question 12). I provided three options – 'at the cinema', 'at home', or 'at cinema & home' – believing that these covered all eventualities, with 'at home' covering physical media, digital platforms and television. However, I neglected another option for viewing films, namely in-flight entertainment[93]. 17 respondents used Question 24, which asked for any further comments, to alert me to this oversight, with one respondent suggesting:

> You might also want to add airlines as a place people see films.
> I know I catch up on many while flying and so do others. In this
> case it is less voluntary but where we decide to try things out.
> (M, 45+, American)

Little research seems to have been done in the fields of film and audience studies around in-flight entertainment. The present research cannot address this gap in the literature, however it is worth considering how being confined to a flight with limited entertainment choices and many hours to fill might encourage people to seek out Disney films, either because they are supposedly easy viewing, or because they allow adults to 'indulge' in animated films without loss to wallet or dignity, as this respondent notes:

> I watched Ant-Man on a plane. In-flight entertainment would be
> the main way I would choose to [watch] an animated film of my
> own accord. (F, 25-34, Australian)[94]

5.4 Film Genres

The Tangible Disney Genre that I am discovering in this research draws on common themes and tropes across 390 Disney films, but of course each individual Disney film falls into one or more existing film genre categories as well. Using data from IMDb, Figure 13 shows all of the genres that Disney films cover. In the sections that follow I will consider how each genre is represented

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[93] Further locations inadvertently omitted were public libraries and schools, mentioned by two respondents.
[94] Although the respondent makes the common association between Disney and animated films, she also mentions *Ant-Man*, which despite use of CGI, is a live-action film.

in Disney films, and how these may have changed over the decades, beginning with the most prevalent genre: family.
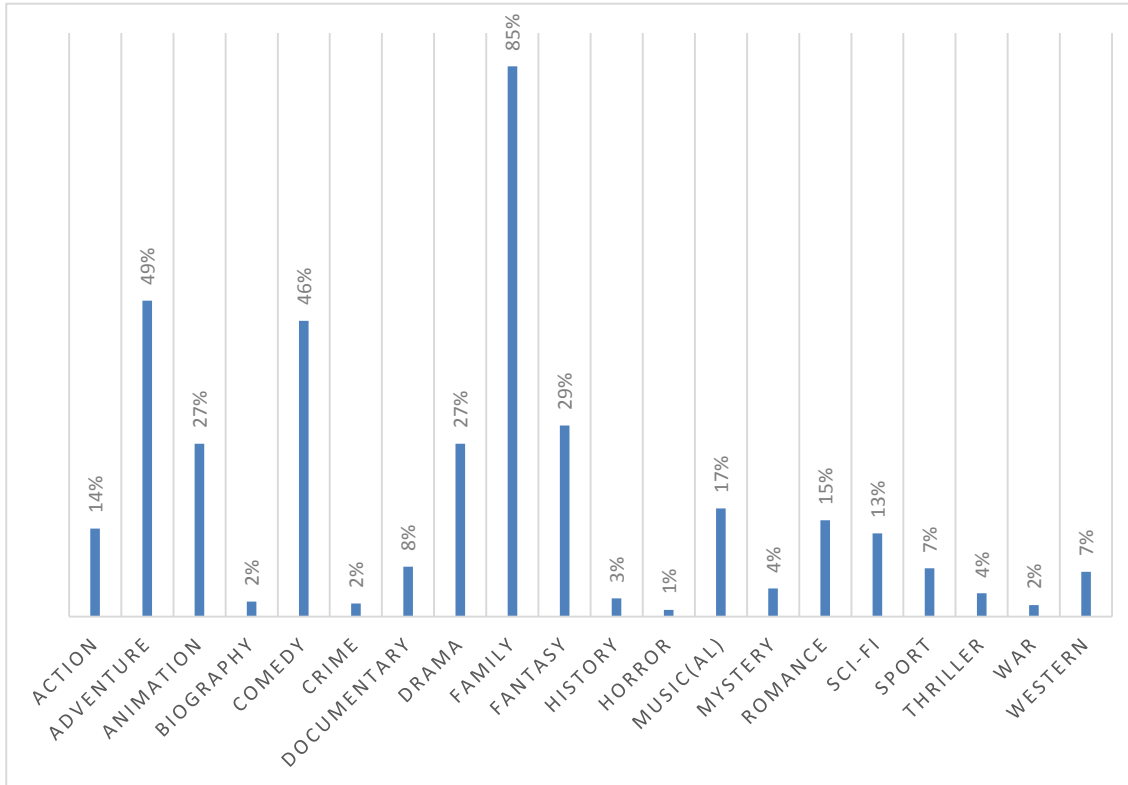
Figure 13: Disney film genres according to film output

Source: Author's own research using data from IMDb.

5.4.1 Family

It is no surprise to find the largest percentage of Disney films assigned to the family genre. This genre, as discussed in section 3.3.3, does little to explain the content of a film, but suggests that it is suitable for a broad audience and will not contain explicit violence, language or sex scenes. While Disney films may feature fantasy violence and romance, none of them are unsuitable for viewing by any but the smallest children (although Marvel and Star Wars films, with more intense violence and occasional swear words permitted by PG-13/12A certificates, skew older).

It is perhaps more surprising that 15% of Disney films are *not* considered part of the family genre. The majority of Disney's documentaries (excepting the

True-Life Adventures series and a couple of others) are not labelled as family films, neither are Marvel and Star Wars films, the live-action Indian co-productions, Jerry Bruckheimer productions (including the *Pirates of the Caribbean* (2003-2011) franchise), sports biography dramas (see below) and a handful of live-action films from the 1980s when Disney tried to reach older audiences (*Tex* (1982d) and *Never Cry Wolf* (1983a), for example). Also worth mentioning is Oscar-nominated drama *The Straight Story* (1999e), a Disney film directed by David Lynch, who is not generally known for family fare.

The family genre label has been applied to all 150 Disney films released prior to 1982, except for animated propaganda documentary *Victory Through Air Power* (1943) and adventure drama *Napoleon and Samantha* (1972d), as well as every animated film from 1937 to 2015. However, since the beginning of the 21st century, almost one third of Disney's films have not been considered part of the family genre. This change has occurred in tandem with Disney's acquisition of new studios and the subsequent increase in PG-13/12A releases, and is evidence of Disney's attempts to reach older audiences. An appeal to family audiences is therefore a key part of Disney's traditional TDG, but it is not as important in recent releases.

5.4.2 Adventure, Comedy, Drama and Fantasy

After the family genre, the most frequent genres to be found in Disney films are adventure (49% of Disney films) and comedy (46%), whether that be in live-action or animated films. Disney's live-action adventure films range from Disney's earliest ventures into live-action filmmaking, including *Treasure Island* (1950b), *The Sword and the Rose* (1953c) and *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954), to literary adaptations such as *White Fang* (1991d), *The Adventures of Huck Finn* (1993a) and *The Three Musketeers* (1993f) in the 1990s, and beyond to blockbusters like *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* (2010d), *John Carter* (2012f), and the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).

Whether adapting novels, comic books, video games or historical events, Disney adventures are often packed with special effects, heroic deeds, and few important roles for women (see 5.5.2 below). While films in the adventure genre

are not necessarily also to be found in the family genre, 96% of Disney comedies are also in the family genre, although only 18 films fall exclusively into the 'family comedy' genre. The first Disney film to put comedy at its heart was *The Shaggy Dog* (1959a), described by *Disney A to Z: The Official Encyclopedia* as 'one of the biggest and most unexpected film milestones in Disney history, the Studio's first live-action comedy set the formula for many Disney movies to come: youngsters, animals, strange—sometimes magical—events, music, and a catchy main title sequence' (Smith, 2016, p.671).

Early examples of the Disney family comedy genre include *The Absent-Minded Professor* (1961a), *That Darn Cat!* (1965b), and *Freaky Friday* (1976a), with similar themes running through later films such as *The Santa Clause* (1994e), *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* (1989b) and *Air Bud* (1997a), and recent comedies about families, *The Odd Life of Timothy Green* (2012g) and *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (2014a). Another noteworthy film is *Heavyweights* (1995d), the first film written by Judd Apatow, producer of many of Hollywood's top-grossing adult comedies[95].

While fewer than half of Disney's films are comedies, or have strong comedic elements, many more have a lightness of touch, even within more dramatic films such as the animated adaptation of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996c), which as well as having rather dark themes of persecution and corruption also features comedy gargoyle sidekicks. Leavening more dramatic films with light-hearted behaviour or characters is presumably part of an appeal to younger members of the audience. 27% of Disney films are categorised as dramas, which can also feature comedy, sci-fi or musical genres.

A similar proportion of Disney films (29%) are classed as fantasies, which in the case of Disney does not necessarily mean sword-and-sorcery fantasy (although *John Carter* comes close) but a fairy tale version of fantasy, based on princesses, fights against evil and tales of anthropomorphic cars and talking animals. In a Disney fantasy, good will inevitably triumph over bad, and

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[95] Judd Apatow's reputation, as well as that of actor Ben Stiller, must surely be the reason why this minor Disney film, earning just over $17 million at the US box office and scoring an aggregated critical rating of 29% from Rotten Tomatoes, was afforded a US Blu-ray release in 2012, featuring over 2.5 hours of additional content.

any darkness will be countered with shades of light. Characters may die (parents especially) and emotions may be fraught, but world views are not incontrovertibly shaken, merely stirred.

5.4.3 Animation

Despite being synonymous with animation, only 27% of Disney films are fully or part-animated, be that traditionally hand-drawn, stop-motion, motion-capture or CGI animation[96]. Of course, animation is actually a medium, rather than a genre (as several questionnaire participants acknowledged), however it is commonly referred to as a genre, including on the list of genres assigned to titles by IMDb. Describing a film as animated reveals little about its content or story, other than perhaps being lazy shorthand for a film suitable for younger audiences, although such a myopic view of animation ignores such adult (non-Disney) fare as *Fritz the Cat* (1972c), *Cool World* (1992c) or *Waltz with Bashir* (2008m).

Table 6 (overleaf) illustrates the different types of animated film released by Disney, alongside the 54 Disney animated Classics, discussed under section 5.3.3. There is perhaps more variety in the range of animation styles and subjects in the Disney film canon than the company is credited for. The prominence of the Disney Princess franchise, which was launched to capitalise on merchandising opportunities, gives the impression that Disney animation is predicated on princesses. The eleven princesses represented in the franchise are drawn from ten animated Classics, plus Pixar's *Brave* (2012d), and these films only account for 10.5% of Disney's animated films.

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[96] Many modern live-action films are awash with CGI effects, so the definition of an animated or part-animated film becomes trickier. For example, the 2016 remake of *The Jungle Book* was almost entirely animated using motion-captured CGI except for the young actor playing Mowgli, but it is considered a live-action film. Furthermore, Disney has announced a 2019 'live-action' remake of *The Lion King* (1994b), which will reportedly be animated in the same CGI manner as *The Jungle Book* but without any human actors. How such a film will be classified – animated or live-action – remains to be seen.

Type of Animated Film	No. of Films	Examples
Animated Classics	54	Pinocchio (1940b) Frozen (2013a)
Pixar productions	16	Toy Story (1995g) Brave (2012d)
Live-action/animation hybrids[97]	7	Mary Poppins (1964c) Enchanted (2007a)
Tinker Bell franchise	6	Tinker Bell (2008k) The Pirate Fairy (2014k)
TV spin-offs	5	A Goofy Movie (1995c) Teacher's Pet (2000c)
Animation co-productions	5	Valiant (2005g) Arjun: The Warrior Prince (2012a)
Winnie the Pooh franchise[98]	3	The Tigger Movie (2000d) Pooh's Heffalump Movie (2005d)
Sequels to Classics	2	Return to Neverland (2002b) The Jungle Book 2 (2003e)
Stop-motion animation[99]	2	James and the Giant Peach (1996d) Frankenweenie (2012e)
ImageMovers Digital	2	A Christmas Carol (2009b) Mars Needs Moms (2011b)
Planes franchise	2	Planes (2013f) Planes: Fire & Rescue (2014l)
Total Animated Films	**104**	

Table 6: Animated Disney films

Source: Author's own research

The six films of the Tinker Bell franchise only received very limited theatrical engagements in the US, and outside the US these films and several of the others listed in Table 6 bypassed the cinema completely, debuting on

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[97] Although featuring characters from the Disney Classics canon, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988b) was a Touchstone Pictures production.

[98] Not including the two Pooh animated Classics.

[99] While *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993e) was released by WDSMP for 3D theatrical re-releases and is branded as a Disney release on recent home media and merchandise, it was originally produced by Touchstone Pictures, thus is not part of the 390 Disney films of the census.

DVD. Similarly, while two sequels to Classics have received theatrical releases, these are the exceptions to the rule whereby 28 such Classics spin-offs have received their premieres on video/DVD.

Disney invented the market for traditionally hand-drawn 2D animated feature films with *Snow White* and went on to wield vast influence over the medium in the decades that followed, which may be considered good or ill. When Pixar partnered with Disney to produce and distribute *Toy Story* in 1995, a new animation revolution was sparked, with the result that CGI has all but wiped out traditionally hand-drawn animation in Disney feature films, as well as in Hollywood more widely. Almost 37% of Disney's animated film output has been computer-generated, and since Disney announced that they would no longer be releasing Classics using traditional 2D animation in 2004, all but five of Disney's animated releases have been wholly animated using CGI.

Although John Lasseter reversed the decision to end the practice of traditional 2D animation when he re-joined Disney in 2006, the comparatively low box office returns for 2D animations *The Princess and the Frog* (2009e) and *Winnie the Pooh* (2011f) have meant that no further traditionally animated features have been forthcoming. It remains to be seen whether the announced sequel to *Enchanted* (2007a), a film that mixed live-action and traditional 2D animation, will represent a return to the medium the Disney Company was built on.

5.4.4 Musicals and Romance, Action and Sci-Fi

Aside from those genres mentioned above, four others account for more than 10% of Disney films. Out of 65 films considered to be musicals, 69% are animated, including the majority of the animated Classics canon, from *Snow White* to *Frozen*. Live-action musicals include several 1960s adaptations of operettas and stories, such as *Babes in Toyland* (1961b) and *The Happiest Millionaire* (1967b), four films featuring the Muppets, from *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992f) to *Muppets Most Wanted* (2014j), several television spin-offs, such as *The Lizzie McGuire Movie* (2003f) and *High School Musical 3: Senior Year* (2008e), as well as an adaptation of a Broadway musical, *Into*

the Woods (2014e), and an original Disney film musical that later became a Broadway show, *Newsies* (1992g)[100]. Indeed, Disney musicals tend to follow classical Broadway musical stylings and share writers such as Alan Menken and Howard Ashman, who work across both media.

In contrast with the musical genre, just 31% of Disney's animated output falls into the romance genre. The romance tag is applied to films in various other genres, including comedy, adventure and drama, and almost all Disney romances are considered to be within the family film genre. Disney romances are of the chaste (fairy tale) variety, with no sexual content, and are exclusively heterosexual in nature (see section 5.5).

The apparent antithesis to musicals and romance, the genres of action and science fiction (sci-fi) also crop up in over 10% of Disney films. Disney's action films are almost exclusively the domain of male lead characters (including all Marvel films) and typically feature special effects and fantasy action (comic book) violence in which not a drop of blood is spilled. The same can be said of the sci-fi films in Disney's back catalogue, which range from the Earth-based weird science of *The Absent-Minded Professor* (1961a) and *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* (1989b), to outer space exploits in *The Black Hole* (1979) and *Rocketman* (1997g), as well as super-heroics in *The Rocketeer* (1991c), *Sky High* (2005e) and the MCU.

5.4.5 Other Genres

Ten other film genres are each present in less than 10% of Disney's film output: documentary (8%); western and sport (7%); mystery and thriller (4%); history (3%); biography, crime and war (2%); and horror (1%).

Half of Disney's 30 documentaries are natural history features from the True-Life Adventures strand (1953-1975) and the Disneynature banner (since

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[100] The stage musical version of *Newsies* ran on Broadway between 2012 and 2014. Disney released a filmed version of the show, *Disney's Newsies: The Broadway Musical* (2017b), to a limited number of cinemas worldwide in February 2017, with a digital release in May 2017. This filmed version, which only showed once at each venue, was preceded by little publicity. It was only through chance that I heard about it and was able to book tickets, having caught the show in New York on my honeymoon. The experience represents yet another of Disney's mysterious approaches to some of its film releases.

2007). Five documentaries are about Disney and its artists, four are shorter IMAX-format films, and the rest range from concert features to wartime propaganda. Aside from *Hannah Montana & Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert* (2008d), Disney's documentaries do not contribute much in the way of box office to the company. Instead, documentaries about the WDC contribute to the mythology of Disney artists, while natural history films show that the giant multi-national conglomerate cares about the planet – especially since the first-run profits from Disneynature films contribute to the Disney Conservation Fund (Smith, 2016, p.201). Documentaries therefore represent opportunities for Disney to gain positive public relations.

Fess Parker, TV's Davy Crockett, appeared in six of the westerns released by Disney in the 1950s, when the genre was more prevalent in Hollywood. Another small flurry of westerns was released by Disney in the 1970s, but only four have been released since 1980. The two westerns released in the 21st century – *Home on the Range (2004b)* and *The Lone Ranger* (2013c) – fared poorly with critics and audiences, so it seems likely that, in common with the rest of Hollywood, the genre is likely to be relegated to Disney's past.

In contrast, sports films have been a near-annual staple of Disney's release schedules since the success of *The Mighty Ducks* (1992e). Such films are generally based on sports popular in the US, such as baseball, basketball and ice hockey, and therefore make little impact internationally. These low budget live-action sports films are responsible for respectable revenues at the US box office however, so there is clearly an audience for them. While some of Disney's sports films are comedies, recent examples of the genre include reality-inspired dramas exceeding two hours in length, with casts headed up by the likes of Denzel Washington, Mark Wahlberg and Kevin Costner. Considering the various sports found in Disney films as listed in Table 7, it is worth pointing out that boxing, a staple of sports films from *Rocky* (1976c) to *Creed* (2015e), has never been featured in a Disney film, perhaps because it is too violent.

Sport	No. of films	Examples
Athletics	4	*The World's Greatest Athlete* (1973b) *McFarland, USA* (2015i)
American Football	4	*Gus* (1976b) *The Game Plan* (2007b)
Ice Hockey	4	*The Mighty Ducks* (1992e) *Miracle* (2004d)
Winter Sports	3	*Cool Runnings* (1993b) *Ice Princess* (2005c)
Basketball	3	*Air Bud* (1997a) *Glory Road* (2006b)
Motor Racing	3	*The Love Bug* (1968b) *Cars* (2006a) (Animated)
Baseball	3	*Angels in the Outfield* (1994a) *Million Dollar Arm* (2014i)
Horse Racing	1	*Secretariat* (2010e)
Soccer	1	*The Big Green* (1995a)
Golf	1	*The Greatest Game Ever Played* (2005a)
Sailing	1	*Morning Light* (2008h) (Documentary)
Extreme Sports	1	*X Games 3D: The Movie* (2009h) (Documentary)
Total Sports Films	**29**	

Table 7: Sports in Disney films

Source: Author's own research

The remaining genres all represent more serious concerns than are usually present in Disney films. When a Disney film does have a wartime setting it is treated lightly, either with a story about an elephant airlift in Vietnam with *Operation Dumbo Drop* (1995e), or about the daring exploits of Civil War spies in *The Great Locomotive Chase* (1956b). The danger is dialled down and the thrills less thrilling than might be found in a rival studio's war film with a more adult-orientated certificate. Similarly, the villains in films that fall within the

Disney crime genre are not murderers but pickpockets in *Emil and the Detectives* (1964a) or jewel thieves in *Muppets Most Wanted* (2014j).

Similarly, the four Disney films assigned the genre label of horror are tame compared to traditional horror films with their 'representation of disturbing and dark subject matter, seek[ing] to elicit responses of fear, terror, disgust, shock, suspense, and, of course, horror from their viewers' (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012, p.211). In Disney films, horror is represented by Bette Midler's comical coven in *Hocus Pocus* (1993c), Bette Davis' gothic turn in *The Watcher in the Woods* (1980b), Tim Burton's monster movie homage *Frankenweenie* (2012e), and the creepy Sleepy Hollow portion of animated Classic *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad* (1949). However, that is not to say that there are no child-scaring moments in the wider Disney canon, such as the horrors of Pleasure Island in *Pinocchio* (1940b) or the Horned King in *The Black Cauldron* (1985), but such disturbing scenes and characters are parts of a more reassuring and less scary film whole.

The genres that are only represented in Disney films in a minor way say as much about the Tangible Disney Genre as the more dominant genres. The TDG is not out to scare audiences through depictions of violent sports, warfare or horror. Where such subjects appear they are tempered with comedy, animation or a light fantasy touch that removes them from real-world concerns, thus denuding them of danger, making them suitable for younger audiences. Unfortunately that can lead to compromises being made, such as in *Into the Woods*, which lost much of its bite in its bloodless transfer from stage to Disney film. But that is not to say that the films are only suitable for child audiences because they have been neutered in this way. In a world of Donald Trump, North Korean nuclear aggression and Brexit, there is a world of escapism to be found for adults in a light-hearted Disney film, knowing that you will not be faced with the explicit violence, language and sex scenes of an R/18 certificate film from another studio.

5.5 Representation

Having considered how different film genres are represented within Disney films, I shall now address the ways in which Disney films handle the representation of gender, race, and sexuality. These areas have been discussed in depth by previous researchers (Bell et al., 1995a, Griffin, 2000, Brode, 2005, England et al., 2011) so I confine my comments to general discussion based on the 390 Disney films and historical or generic trends. Figure 14 illustrates how these three areas of representation are reflected in Disney films.
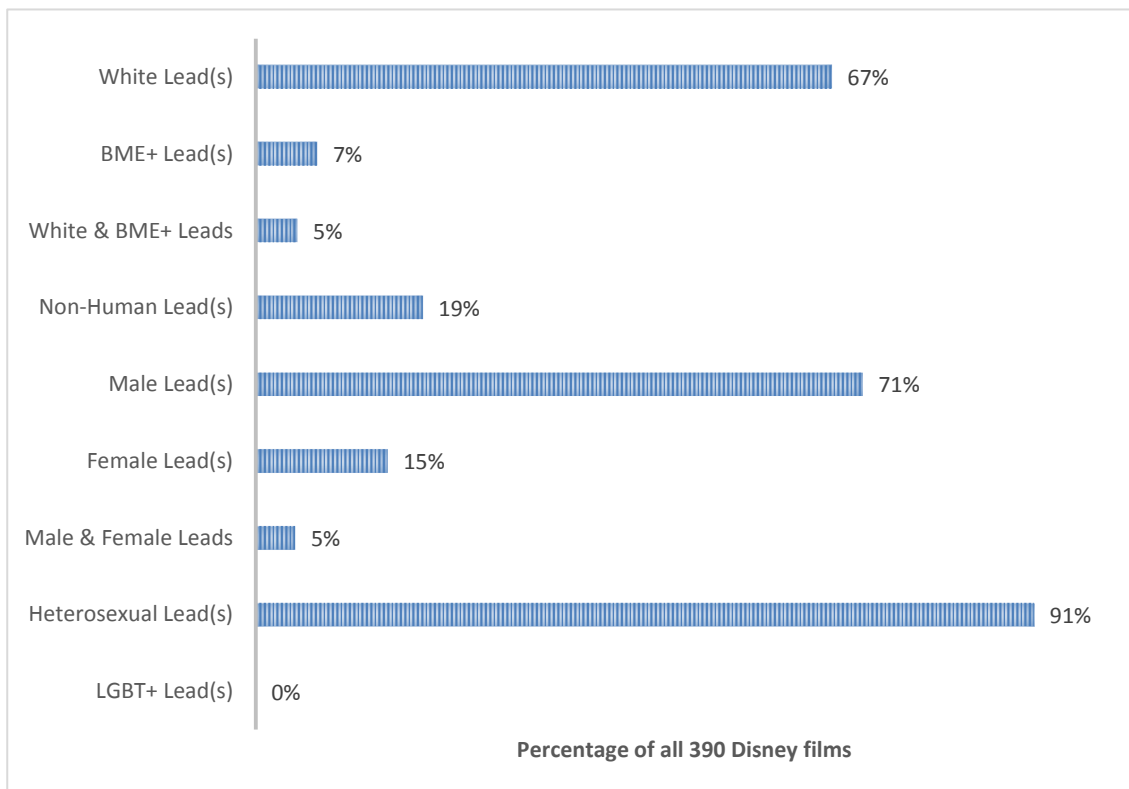
Figure 14: Representation and diversity in Disney films[101]

Source: Analysis of statistical data.

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[101] Data on representation is drawn from a review of all 390 films by the author, based on first-hand knowledge and use of *Disney A-Z: The Official Encyclopedia*. By 'lead' I refer to the title character and actor and/or the key drivers of the story. A handful of films – documentaries and package features – are not documented in the figures, hence figures for race, gender and sexuality do not total 100%.

5.5.1 Race

19% of Disney films feature non-human leads – animals and cars – both live-action and animated. A further 79% of films are led by humans, including animated depictions of humans such as Peter Pan. Of these films featuring humans, 85% feature white leads, 9% feature leads who are black or minority ethnic (BME), and 6% feature both white and BME leads. I use the term BME here rather than 'non-white' as the latter term implies that white is the 'norm'.

As mentioned in section 5.3.2, Disney's most infamous film when it comes to matters of race is *Song of the South*, one of seven films released in Walt Disney's lifetime to prominently feature BME actors/characters. Animated package features *Saludos Amigos* (1942b) and *The Three Caballeros* (1944) were produced following a well-publicised trip by Walt Disney and his artists around the South American continent, as documented in *Walt & El Grupo* (2008l), with the purpose of promoting good relations between the two American continents at a time of war. As such the films introduced Latin American characters, alongside Donald Duck.

Latin America is also the setting for *The Littlest Outlaw* (1955b) and *The Sign of Zorro* (1958b). While the former was filmed 'on location in Mexico, once in English and once in Spanish, enabling a quick release in Spanish-speaking countries' (Smith, 2016, p.453), the latter was filmed on Disney's Californian studio backlot, with Guy Williams, who was of Italian-American descent, in the lead role of Mexican Zorro. Similarly, in *The Light in the Forest* (1958a) and *Tonka* (1958c), the Native American lead characters were played by white Americans, although with Native Americans among the supporting casts.

Black actors co-starred in *The Biscuit Eater* (1972a) and *The Devil and Max Devlin* (1981b), while *The World's Greatest Athlete* (1973b) and *Cheetah* (1989a) were set in Africa and had casts with significant numbers of BME actors. These four films were the only examples of such racially diverse casting across Disney releases during the 1970s and 1980s. The situation improved somewhat from the beginning of the 1990s with at least one film annually starring or co-starring BME actors. These films include *Cool Runnings* (1993b), the true story of a Jamaican bob-sled team, and *The Haunted Mansion* (2003d),

inspired by the theme park ride and starring Eddie Murphy. The latter film represents a common approach to diversity in Disney films, whereby a prominent BME actor such as Dwayne Johnson, Cuba Gooding Jr. or Denzel Washington leads a mostly white cast.

Perhaps greater (although not unproblematic) racial representation is to be found in the animated Classics, which besides featuring the first African American princess in *The Princess and the Frog* (2009e), explore racial diversity beyond the African American experience. Thus *Mulan* (1998c) is set in China and *Aladdin* (1992a) in the Middle East, while *Pocahontas* (1995f) is Native American and *Lilo & Stitch* (2002a) is led by a Hawaiian cast (and an alien). Furthermore, *Atlantis: The Lost Empire* (2001a) and *Big Hero 6* (2014b) both quietly fill their ensembles from a mix of different races.

Naturally Disney's Indian productions have Indian casts, and *Million Dollar Arm* (2014i) has a cast of Indian supporting characters, albeit led by white Jon Hamm, but diversity does not often stretch beyond African American faces in Disney's live-action features. With *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015k), Disney put black British actor John Boyega in one of the lead roles, proving that a blockbuster could make millions without white male leads[102]. However, as the film already came with a built-in audience perhaps it made little difference who was in the lead roles – the film was almost certain to be a hit anyway. Regardless, the success of the diverse *Force Awakens* cast, as well as that of *Rogue One* (2016k), plus the colour-blind casting of the *Beauty and the Beast* (2017a) supporting cast, the Polynesia-set animated Classic *Moana* (2016h), and upcoming black superhero movie *Black Panther* (2018a) in the MCU all hopefully signal a turn to diversity of representation not just across Disney films but across Hollywood as a whole.

5.5.2 Gender

The diversity of gender in Disney films is another ongoing matter, again referenced by recent films outside of the scope of the census. For example, the

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[102] Harrison Ford and Mark Hamill found their names above the credits on the film, but both had less screen time than Boyega and the new, younger cast.

social media furore surrounding the lack of merchandising for the character of Rey (Daisy Ridley) in *The Force Awakens* and the high-profile casting of Emma Watson, one of Hollywood's most out-spoken feminists in the role of Belle in *Beauty and the Beast* ensured Disney's difficult relationship with gender remains a part of the cultural conversation.

Figure 14 indicated that 71% of the lead roles in Disney films are filled by men, with a further 5% of films giving significant roles to both men and women, leaving just 15% of Disney films with women in lead roles. And this figure is before considering how active or vocal such female characters are (see Griffin et al., 2016, and studies discussed by Vincent, 2016). One third of the films with female leads are animated, including Disney Princess films such as *Snow White* and *Pocahontas*, the Tinker Bell franchise, as well as *Home on the Range* (2004b), whose leads are cows voiced by Judi Dench and Roseanne Barr.

Disney's first fully live-action film, *Treasure Island* (1950b) did not contain a single credited part for a woman, and it was not until Disney's 48th film, *Pollyanna* (1960), that a live-action film from the studio had a female protagonist. The film featured the Disney debut of Hayley Mills, who was the female lead in six of the eight female-led films released during the 1960s[103]. A young Jodie Foster would take on the role of go-to female lead for Disney in the 1970s, in *Napoleon and Samantha* (1972d), *Freaky Friday* (1976a) and *Candleshoe* (1978a), while Lindsay Lohan performed a similar role in the early 2000s, starring in remakes of *The Parent Trap* (1998d), and *Freaky Friday* (2003c), belated sequel *Herbie Fully Loaded* (2005b), and *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen* (2004a).

Other big Hollywood names to work for Disney include Bette Midler, Bette Davis, Glenn Close, Reece Witherspoon, Anne Hathaway and Mia Wasikowska. The first three actresses worked for Disney in their later careers, while the latter three used Disney stardom as stepping stones to bigger things. It is notable that when playing heroes, characters and actresses tend to be

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[103] As well as *Pollyanna*, Mills starred in *The Parent Trap* (1961e) (twice, playing identical twins), *In Search of the Castaways* (1962), *Summer Magic* (1963c), *The Moon-Spinners* (1964e), and *That Darn Cat!* (1965b). The other two live-action films with female co-leads in the 1960s were *Babes in Toyland* (1961b) and *A Tiger Walks* (1964f), featuring Annette Funicello and Vera Miles, respectively.

relatively young, but when playing villains, the roles are taken by older actresses. Even rarer than older actresses in lead roles are BME actresses, with just *College Road Trip* and *Khoobsurat* boasting such leads[104].

If representation of women on screen in Disney films seems woeful, it is nothing compared to representation behind the camera, with just twelve female directors, three in co-directing roles with male counterparts, across 390 films. The data in Figure 15 seems to accord with the generally poor representation of women in directing roles throughout Hollywood. Holly Goldberg Stone was the first woman to direct a Disney film, with *The Big Green* (1995a), while five of the twelve female (co-)directing credits have taken place since 2012, so there are perhaps signs of improvement. The roles of women in other parts of the filmmaking process may well be better represented, however it is outside the scope of this study to gather information beyond directors[105].
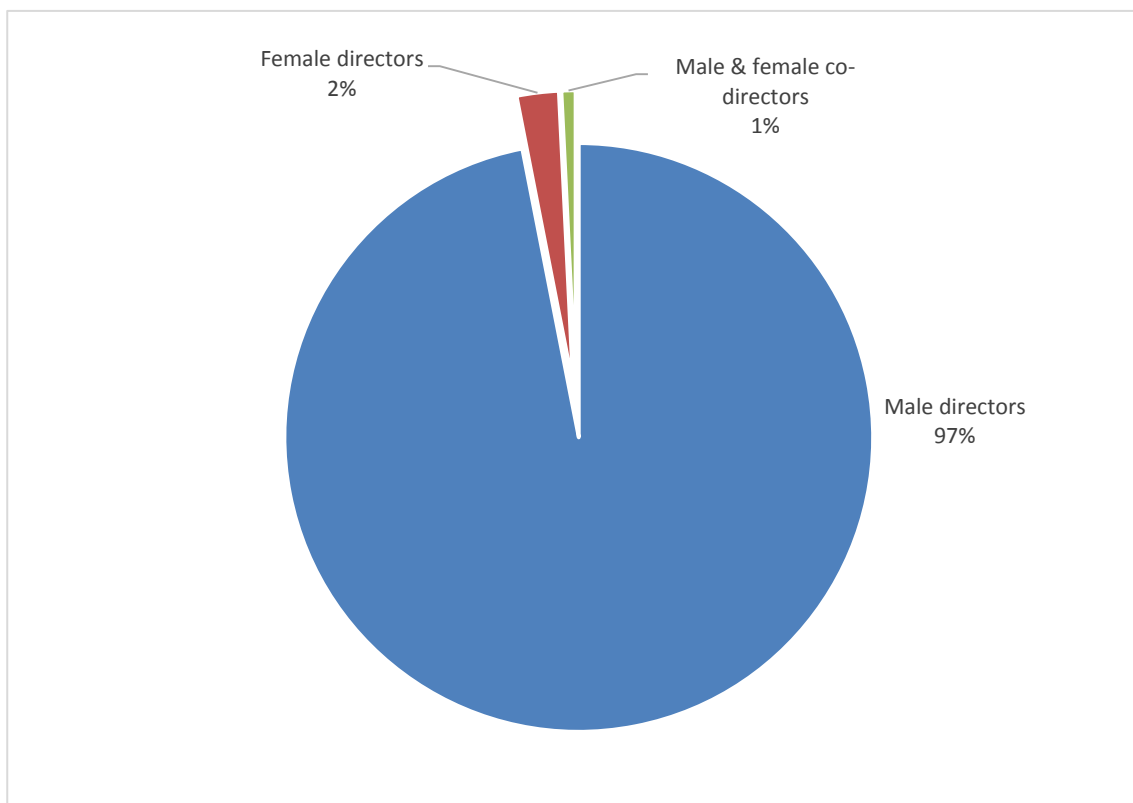
Figure 15: Disney film directors by gender

Source: Author's analysis of output survey.

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[104] *Queen of Katwe* (2016j), set in Uganda and directed by Indian Mira Nair, was released outside the scope of the census.

[105] The generally overlooked role of women in Disney animation is addressed in a new publication from Disney Editions: *Ink & Paint: The Women of Walt Disney's Animation* (Johnson, 2017).

5.5.3 Sexuality

As noted in section 5.4.4, Disney romances are exclusively heterosexual in nature. While 91% of Disney films have featured heterosexual lead characters, the remaining 9% of films are those such as natural history documentaries where discussion of sexuality is inapplicable. It took until 2017 for the notion of explicitly homosexual characters (rather than characters who have been coded as gay) and homosexual relationships to be broached in a Disney film, albeit in a way that echoes Sean Griffin's earlier observation that 'Disney wants more money, and if that means giving a nod to potential homosexual customers, then so be it' (2000, p.xviii).

Beauty and the Beast (2017a) received much pre-release publicity concerning what director Bill Condon (himself openly gay) called an 'exclusively gay moment in a Disney movie' (quoted in Cain, 2017, p.114). This moment turned out to give little more than a nod to homosexuality, in a scene where you could blink and miss the gay content (as my husband did)[106], but that this moment exists at all in a Disney film is progress of a sort. There have also been Twitter campaigns by non-heterosexual audiences eager to see themselves represented in Disney films calling on Disney to make the big screen Captain America and *Frozen*'s Elsa gay in future films. However, the importance of international markets on box office returns (*Beauty and the Beast* suffered cuts and bans in some countries as a result of the 'explicitly gay moment' furore) may mean that Disney's attempts to introduce non-heterosexual characters will continue to be a minor concern.

Disney's approach to LGBT+ characters in its films is not reflective of the company's wider activities. Disney has employed gay songwriters such as Elton John and Howard Ashman to work on its films; has aired several television series with gay characters or themes on its ABC television networks; holds an annual 'Gay Days' pride celebration at Walt Disney World theme park; and donated $1 million to victims of the mass shooting at an Orlando gay nightclub

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[106] For a split second during a ballroom dance scene at the climax of the film the character of LeFou (played by Josh Gad) dances with a minor character, Stanley (played by Alexis Loizon). Although this is the 'exclusively gay moment', the characters were quite clearly established as other than heterosexual earlier in the film.

in 2016 (Rainey, 2016). It is a shame that Disney's support of the LGBT+ community does not translate into the films seen by millions around the world, but slow progress does appear to be being made.

5.5.4 Other Representational Issues

Disney films also have similar problems with positive representation as other Hollywood studios when it comes to age, sex and disability. The heroes and heroines of Disney films tend to skew young, although there are rare exceptions, such as *The Straight Story* (1999e) and *Up* (2009g), that feature elderly protagonists.

Disney films feature cis-gendered leads exclusively, although the lead in *Mulan* (1998c) and supporting characters such as Pleakley in *Lilo & Stich* (2002a) may be read as experimenting with the boundaries between male and female.

Similarly, Disney films only rarely include characters with disabilities. When they do they are either issue-based dramas such as *Amy* (1981a), set in a school for the deaf, or the characters are supporting players with the disability either played for laughs or villainy (see for example the treatment of Dory's memory loss in *Finding Nemo* (2003b), or the peg-legged lackey Fidget in *The Great Mouse Detective* (1986)). An exception is the title character in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996c) who does get a happy ending, but not a romantic one.

5.6 Disney Brand or Disney Genre?

As discussed earlier (section 3.1), one of the definitions of film genre is 'shared characteristics of film form, film style, iconography, or content' (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012, p.194). So far this chapter has considered this aspect of film genre, looking for themes and tropes that link Disney films in terms of form, style, iconography and content. It has also considered elements of a second definition of film genre: 'film industry practices of production and marketing' ((Kuhn and Westwell, 2012, p.194), in the ways in which Disney produces and

markets its films. But what separates the Disney genre from a Disney brand, or simply the product of a Disney studio?

Leading independent branded business valuation and strategy consultancy Brand Finance defines the term brand as 'a collection of images/ideas representing a producer; such as a name, logo, slogan, and design conveying the essence of the company, product or service' (Brand Finance, 2017a). In the case of Disney one could describe the distinctive cursive logo (which was not actually based on Walt Disney's real signature) and image/silhouette of Mickey Mouse as key parts of the Disney brand. The Disney brand encompasses all of Disney's activities, beyond film, including theme parks, television, and much more. In *The Lion King*, Mufasa tells Simba that he will rule 'everything the light touches', and the light never seems to go down on Disney's global empire.

Rank		Company	Brand value (USD $ millions)	
2017	2016		2017	2016
1	1	Walt Disney	34,454	31,231
2	3	FOX	15,814	15,541
3	4	NBC	13,736	11,401
4	-	UNIVERSAL	10,435	-
5	5	CBS	9,902	7,777
6	6	ABC	9,371	7,324
7	8	Warner Bros.	8,055	6,683
8	7	BBC	5,871	7,028
9	9	21st Century Fox	5,301	5,625
10	10	Thomson Reuters	5,000	5,086

Table 8: The top ten most valuable media brands of 2017

Source: Brand Finance Brandirectory (Brand Finance, 2017b).

Table 8 shows that Disney has been ranked by Brand Finance as the most valuable media brand in the world for the second year in a row, with double the brand value of the second-placed FOX television network. Additionally, the Disney-owned ABC television network ranks 6th and Disney's

ESPN sports brand is 11th, a dominance of the media industry unmatched by Disney's rivals.

When Disney was reported to be the top media brand in 2016, it was acknowledged that 'Disney's strength is founded on its rich history and original creations, however its now dominant position is the result of its many acquisitions and the powerful brands it has brought under its control' (Brand Finance, 2016). Such acquired brands included ABC, ESPN, The Muppets, Marvel, Pixar and, most importantly in 2016, Lucasfilm and its Star Wars brand, which has an estimated value of 'US$10 billion, dwarfing the US$4.05 billion Disney paid for Lucasfilm in 2012' (Brand Finance, 2016). Disney has wasted little time in merging these acquired brands with the Disney brand.

However, Marvel, Lucasfilm and Star Wars are still incredibly strong brands in their own right. Films produced by these studios and distributed by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures (WDSMP) feature the animated Marvel and Lucasfilm company logos first and foremost, and the Walt Disney castle logo is not present – at the very end of the film's credits WDSMP is listed as distributor, but otherwise Disney branding is absent. The Marvel and Lucasfilm brands brought their own consumers with them to Disney, and it seems important that the films produced by these acquired studios retain their distinct iconography.

Step foot in a Disney theme park or Disney Store, however, and it is clear that Marvel and Star Wars characters are important parts of Disney's merchandising strategy and thus its wider brand. The Disney brand therefore seems to be tied up in matters of finance and revenues beyond the box office, which appears to be in accord with Brand Finance's definition of brand as well as their valuation based on economic power.

The idea of a genre is less easy to put a value on than a brand, especially when more narrowly focused on the medium of film. It is also important to note that brands and genres are not particularly interchangeable concepts. Consider the top ten valuable brands in Table 8 – all are brands with distinctive logos and media products (although I would argue that Thomson Reuters would have least recognition among the general public). But it would

not be possible to describe each company listed as a genre, since the generic traits of a Universal or Warner Bros. film or television programme are not immediately identifiable. The BBC might have a reputation for quality British programming, but could the typical elements of a BBC film or drama be easily described generically? Without reading the mission statements of each of these companies I would argue that it is near impossible to distinguish generic themes in the same way that can be done for the films produced and distributed by Disney.

While Marvel and Star Wars films are distinctive brands in their own right, they also share elements of the wider Disney film genre, elements which have been discussed above as being light-hearted fantasies that are suitable for all ages, with a conservative, but ever more progressive, approach to representation.

5.7 Tangible Disney Genre in 2015

Analysis of the 390 Disney films in the census shows that while Disney has been through fluctuations in popularity, volume of output and economic clout, there have been consistent themes running throughout its filmography. The films released in the US and UK in 2015 illustrate these themes and attempt to walk a line between nostalgia for Disney's past and attempting to be part of a modern, inclusive, progressive filmmaking culture.

The 12 films released in 2015 are illustrated in Figure 16 along with their box office grosses split between domestic (US) and foreign. In the sections that follow I analyse four different groups of film (animation; live-action: Walt Disney Pictures; live-action: Marvel and Star Wars; and live-action: documentary and India) that were released in 2015 and place them in context of the 390 Disney films and the emerging TDG.
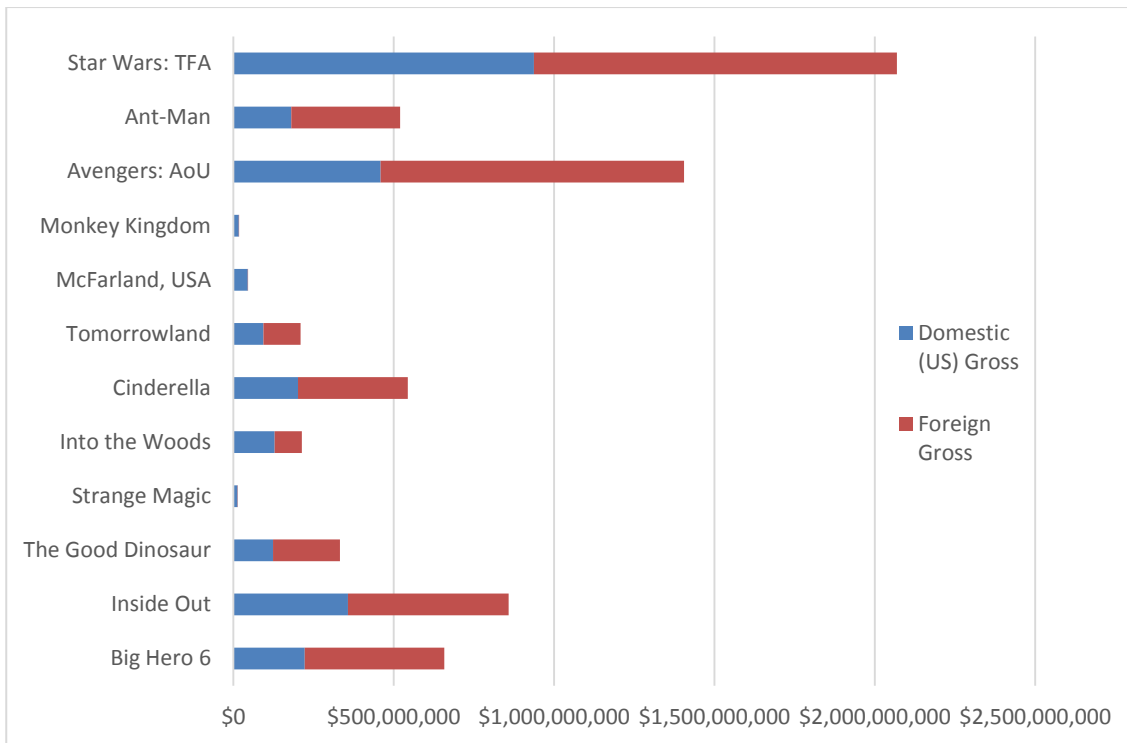
Figure 16: Box office grosses for 2015 Disney films by title

Source: Box Office Mojo (www.boxofficemojo.com, accessed: 12th May 2017).

5.7.1 Animation

Big Hero 6 (2014b), released in the UK in January 2015, was Disney's 54th animated Classic, being the most prestigious line of animated films produced and promoted by Disney since the release of *Snow White* in 1937. Where past Classics adapted popular fairy tales, *Big Hero 6* drew inspiration from the pages of Marvel comics. Eschewing the musical and romantic genres found in the immensely popular *Frozen* (2013a), the film instead manages to parlay the sci-fi-action genre into a successful package under the Disney name, a feat that proved challenging for live-action sci-fi films of the period. Traditional Disney themes of good overcoming evil are subverted by a new trope in the Disney Classics field, that of the surprise reveal of the true villain's identity[107].

In contrast to the animated films of Walt Disney Animation Studios (WDAS), the stories told by Pixar Animation Studios (PAS) films do not follow

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[107] This trope is in danger of overuse, however, as it has been employed in four of the five most recent animated Classics: *Wreck-It Ralph* (2012h), *Frozen* (2013a), *Big Hero 6* (2014b), and *Zootopia* (2016m).

the traditional hero/villain binary. Thus both *Inside Out* (2015g) and *The Good Dinosaur* (2015f), respectively concerning the anthropomorphic emotions living inside an adolescent's head and a world where dinosaurs never died out and live alongside prehistoric humans, eschew easy good/bad dichotomies. Instead, *Inside Out* demonstrates the complexities of human emotion, particularly at the boundary between childhood and puberty, with female protagonists. Meanwhile *The Good Dinosaur* is more explicitly a buddy movie of the Pixar variety – two initially mismatched male characters on a literal and metaphorical journey to accept each other (cf. the Toy Story, Cars and Monsters Inc. franchises, plus *Up*, and *Ratatouille*).

Pixar is often thought to be more progressive and adult-friendly than Disney, but Disney's *Big Hero 6* and Pixar's *Inside Out* (successive winners of the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature) managed to combine representational diversity and storytelling that pleased both audiences and critics, young and old. However, to differentiate between the films made by WDAS and PAS is somewhat disingenuous as both are subsidiaries of Walt Disney Studios and the films they produce share common elements of the TDG. Those who argue that Pixar films are not 'Disney films' seem to have trouble reconciling their idea of Disney with the perceived acceptability or maturity of Pixar produced pictures. This Pixar prejudice will be examined further when considering the responses of audiences to Disney films in Chapter 6.

Strange Magic (2015l) is unusual in that it was produced by Lucasfilm Animation[108] rather than WDAS, PAS, Disneytoon Studios or Walt Disney Television Animation. The film was distributed with little fanfare or critical praise in the UK by WDSMP, seven months after its US cinematic debut, although sources differ on whether WDSMP or Touchstone was the domestic distributor. The subsequent US DVD release was attributed to Touchstone Home Entertainment. This confusion over how to brand an adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with goblins and elves singing pop songs probably had much to do with its muted reception. The release follows in the tradition of animated Disney films that stand out for their unusual animated

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[108] Lucasfilm Animation previously produced *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* (2008j) and the TV series (2008-2014) of the same name.

provenance, such as *James and the Giant Peach* (1996d), *Valiant* (2005g), and *Roadside Romeo* (2008i). However unusually produced, the film is of course suitable for all ages, featuring fantasy, adventure and comedy as per the TDG.

5.7.2 Live-action: Walt Disney Pictures

Four live-action fictional features were released by Walt Disney Pictures in 2015, including *Into the Woods* (2014e), a Broadway musical adaptation that was released in the US on Christmas Day 2014, and in the UK two weeks later. With its alternate takes of fairy tales including Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Riding Hood and Cinderella, all of which had previously been adapted by Disney[109], along with its Broadway musical score, the film seemed to be a good fit for Disney. However, to slot more neatly into the TDG, the original story, which turns bloody and dark in its second act, was cleaned up and somewhat denuded, which left one critic wondering, 'who is this for?' (Errigo, 2016). The answer, as seen in Figure 16, was not as many people as enjoyed most other Disney films in 2015.

Cinderella appeared twice in Disney films of 2015, portrayed by Anna Kendrick in *Into the Woods*, and by Lily James in the live-action remake of the 1950 animated Classic, *Cinderella* (2015d). The poster for the latter makes a feature of Cinderella's big blue ball gown, but with stormy skies suggesting darkness looming behind her, seemingly suggesting that this will be a more serious fairy tale adaptation. While the live-action version dispenses with the singing mice of the original, it is actually quite faithful to its source.

A hit with critics and audiences, this *Cinderella* continued the trend of live-action adaptations of Classics, mixing nostalgia for the original films with a progressive slant, thus the heroines of *Alice in Wonderland* (2010a) and *Cinderella* appear to have more agency in their lives and the villainous *Maleficent* (2014h) is given a back story to explain her actions. In post-census remakes, *The Jungle Book* (2016f) features an Indian-American actor in the role

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[109] Jack and the Beanstalk became Mickey and the Beanstalk in *Fun & Fancy Free* (1947); Little Red Riding Hood appeared in *The Big Bad Wolf* (1934) short; while Cinderella was animated in 1950 and live-action in 2015.

of Mowgli, and *Beauty and Beast* (2017a) adds feminist, queer and racial representation alongside songs and dialogue lifted directly from the original 1991 film.

This mixture of nostalgia and progressive attitudes to casting and storytelling appears to be a hit with audiences, as these remakes have made millions (sometimes billions) of dollars each. Nostalgia is 'a state of longing for something that is known to be irretrievable, but is sought anyway' (Cook, 2005, p.3) and Disney has long exploited the condition, be it nostalgia for the frontier days of Davy Crockett, for childhood generally, or for an unrealised world safe from horror and distress. Exploiting nostalgia for Disney's own past is a more recent phenomenon, for while there have been remakes of Disney movies in the past (see section 5.2), remakes have become a key part of Disney's filmmaking strategy for the foreseeable future.

Disney's biggest gamble in 2015 was the film *Tomorrowland* (2015m), a $190 million budget original sci-fi film, inspired by Tomorrowland in the Disney theme parks. Released in the UK as *Tomorrowland: A World Beyond*, the film only managed to earn $209 million from the global box office ($93.4 million in the US), thus is considered a flop (*Into the Woods* earned a similar sum, but had a $50 million budget). Despite George Clooney in a lead role and Brad Bird, responsible for Pixar hits *The Incredibles* (2004c) and *Ratatouille* (2007e), directing, the film was unable to distinguish itself in a crowded blockbuster marketplace, especially since Disney's own *Avengers: Age of Ultron* remained in cinemas. Another film set in a theme park, *Jurassic World* (2015h), was released not long after *Tomorrowland*, exploiting nostalgia for *Jurassic Park* (1993d) to become the fourth highest grossing film of all time. Although *Tomorrowland* conformed to most aspects of the TDG, an unfamiliar Disney sci-fi film proved a turn-off for potential audiences.

A surer bet was *McFarland, USA* (2015i), released as simply *McFarland* in the UK. Although it made $45.7 million at the worldwide box office (off a $17 million budget), just $1.2 million came from outside the US (<$20,000 in the UK). The performance of *McFarland, USA* follows the same box office gross pattern as every other male-led, fictional sports drama released by Disney since 2000, as illustrated in Figure 17.
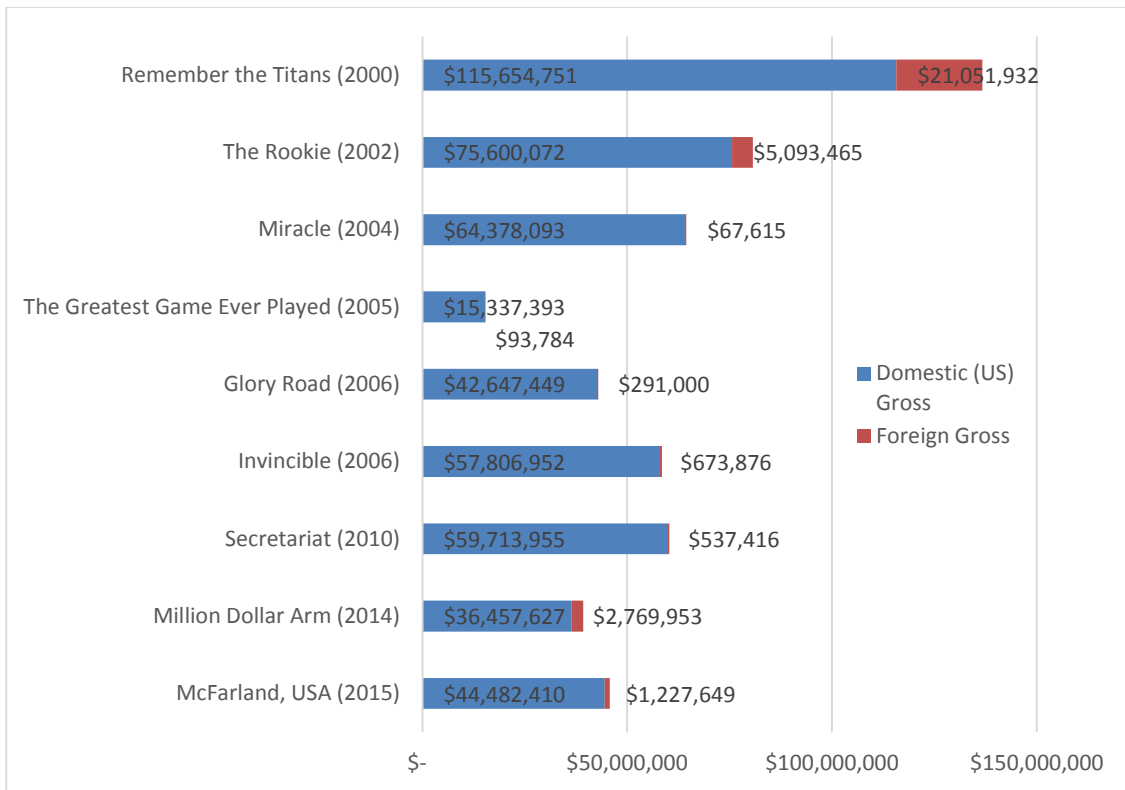
Figure 17: Box office grosses for Disney sports dramas 2000-2015[110]

Source: Box Office Mojo (www.boxofficemojo.com, Accessed: 12th May 2017).

So while *McFarland, USA* was not a hit on the level of *Cinderella*, it did decent business for the sports film sub-genre of the TDG. Although released in a handful of territories outside the US, the film was not supported by merchandising, A-list stars or promotional hype, or indeed nostalgia for the sport depicted in the film. While the film has yet to be released to physical home media in the UK, it was broadcast nine times in a four week period on Sky Cinema Disney.

5.7.3 Live-action: Marvel & Star Wars

The importance of the acquired Marvel and Star Wars brands to Disney's profit margins can be seen in Figure 16, with both *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* and *Avengers: Age of Ultron* outperforming every other Disney and Pixar release. To further emphasise this importance, Figure 18 illustrates the box

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[110] Figures are unadjusted for inflation.

office revenues of Disney's three main film categories: Animation (including Disney and Pixar); Walt Disney Pictures: Live-Action; and Marvel & Star Wars. Over 50% of Disney's 2015 box office revenue was generated by just three films from Marvel and Lucasfilm, with over a third of the total earned from foreign territories.
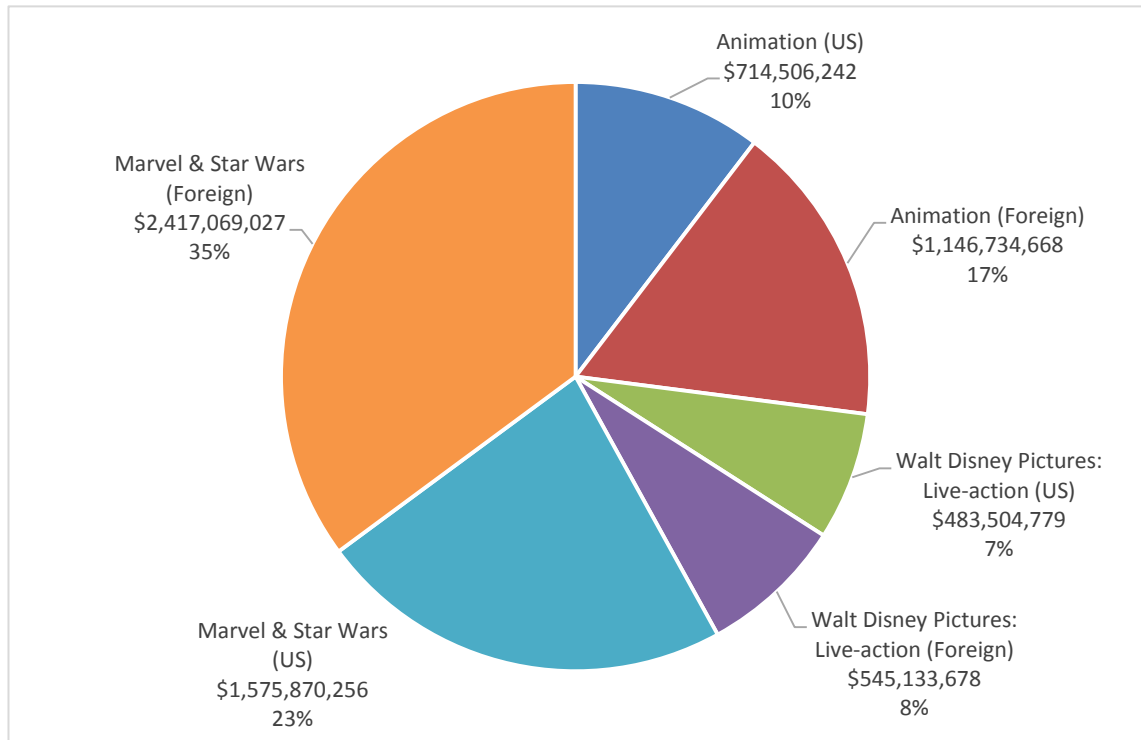
Figure 18: Box office grosses for 2015 Disney films by category[111]

Source: Box Office Mojo (www.boxofficemojo.com, Accessed: 12th May 2017).

When considering the success of Marvel and Star Wars films, it should be pointed out that *The Force Awakens* was the first Star Wars film released since Disney bought Lucasfilm, and the first live-action Star Wars film to continue the saga since *Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith* (2005f). As such, this film came loaded with anticipation from fans and critics alike, particularly those looking to Disney to restore the prestige to the original saga (1977-1983) that was felt to be missing from the 'prequel' trilogy (1999-2005). Similarly, *Age of Ultron* was the sequel to billion-dollar-grossing *The Avengers*

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[111] Box office figures for documentaries and Indian co-productions were negligible.

(2012b), and featured characters from several other Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) films. So both films had high expectations, and both earned positive critical reviews.

By contrast, *Ant-Man* generated over $500 million worldwide, much less than *Age of Ultron*. However, *Ant-Man* also had a budget that was half as big as *Age of Ultron*, featured the debut of a lesser-known comic character, and starred non-A-list comedian Paul Rudd. A troubled production history, with initial writer/director Edgar Wright replaced by Peyton Reed, also kept expectations low among MCU fans. However, Marvel's offbeat directing choices and fresh takes on the comic book genre continued to defy sceptics looking for the superhero bubble to burst, and *Ant-Man* was considered a success. The character appeared again in *Captain America: Civil War* (2016b) and a sequel is due in 2018.

As has been established, the TDG means that Disney films are suitable for all ages and are typically live-action, with elements of fantasy, comedy and action. All of these attributes are integral to the Disney-released Marvel and Star Wars films, although 'suitable for all ages' is questionable. Disney's Marvel and Star Wars films have all been afforded PG-13 certificates in the US, making up half of the PG-13 Disney films in the census. The other PG-13 Disney films in the census are the four Pirates of the Caribbean films[112] (2003-2011), blockbuster fantasies *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* (2010d), *Once Upon a Warrior* (2011c), *John Carter* (2012f) and *The Lone Ranger* (2013c), plus biopic *Saving Mr. Banks* (2013g)[113]. The PG-13 and 12A certificates indicate that some scenes may be unsuitable for children under those ages, but it is ultimately for the accompanying adults to decide whether to let their child watch such a film.

According to guidance from the British Board of Film Classification (www.bbfc.co.uk), *The Force Awakens*, *Age of Ultron* and *Ant-Man* all feature moderate violence, sometimes specified as either fantasy or action violence,

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[112] Films rated PG-13 and R (US) or 12A, 15 and 18 (UK) had been produced by Touchstone, Hollywood Pictures and Miramax, but *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* (2003g) was the first film released under the Disney name to be rated PG-13/12.
[113] All 16 of these films have been rated 12A in the UK, except *Saving Mr. Banks*, which was rated PG, and *Once Upon a Warrior*, which was not released in the UK.

and *Age of Ultron* is acknowledged to have occasional bloody moments. This latter detail is highly unusual in a Disney film, as is the moderate bad language highlighted in the guidance for *Ant-Man* – the Parents' Guide section on IMDb's listing lists four instances of 'shit', plus 'pussy' 'damn' and 'ass', though notes that 'this is much more mild than other PG-13 films' (IMDb, n/d-b). Bad language is practically unheard of in the majority of Disney films, even the PG-rated ones that allow a minimum of mild curses.

In fact, every Disney film released during 2015 (except *Monkey Kingdom*) was rated PG or PG-13, suggesting that Disney films are becoming less suitable for the youngest audience members to watch. It could be argued that these ratings indicate a change in approach to the film classification process, which is a lot less open and accountable in the US compared with the UK. Either way, Disney's ownership of Marvel and Star Wars is evidence that the TDG is now skewing towards a slightly older audience, thus a caveat to the idea that Disney films are naturally 'suitable for all ages' is needed. Disney films have seemingly lost some of their innocence, although this process had begun before Marvel and Star Wars came under the Disney umbrella.

5.7.4 Live-action: Documentary & India

Before leaving 2015 behind, it is worth taking a moment to consider some more atypical Disney releases. *Monkey Kingdom*, the eighth documentary from the Disneynature studio, earned positive critical reviews and solid box office revenues, on a par with its predecessors, as shown in Figure 19. Disney films regularly feature anthropomorphised animals, whether they are animated, acting on set, or filmed in the wild, and the Disneynature strand revives the natural history documentary preoccupation of the True-Life Adventures series from the 1950s. Disneynature documentaries, like many fictional Disney films, present the natural world in such a way that will not cause distress to younger members of the audience.
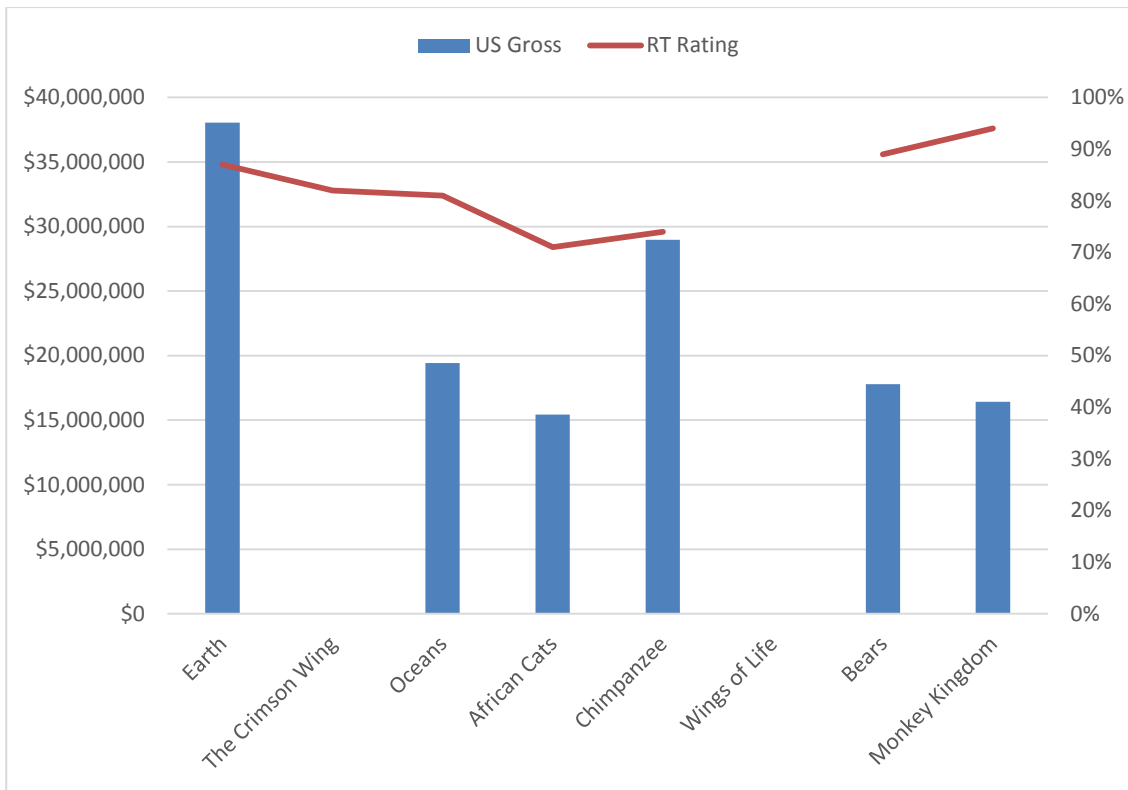
Figure 19: Disneynature films: US box office grosses and critical ratings[114]

Source: Data compiled by author from Box Office Mojo and Rotten Tomatoes websites.

The other minor release of 2015 was *ABCD 2*, a musical sequel to a non-Disney film, which was co-produced in India. This was Disney's sixth Hindi-language film (and seventh Indian film, including the Telugu language *Once Upon a Warrior*) to be produced in India and receive a limited release in the US[115]. Disney has co-produced films in other countries outside the US ever

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[114] The lack of data for two of the films can be explained as follows:
Wings of Life (2011e) premiered in France as *Pollen* and was only released in one US theatre for one week (presumably for Academy Awards consideration), prior to a wider DVD/Blu-ray release.
The Crimson Wing: Mystery of the Flamingos (2008b) similarly premiered in France, and was also released theatrically in the UK, prior to a US DVD/Blu-ray premiere in 2010. The circumstances surrounding the film's release were overlooked in the early stages of the research, and strictly the film should therefore not be included in the census using my operational definition of Disney film. Further research finds that *The Crimson Wing* actually received theatrical exhibition in the US at the Hampton International Film Festival in October 2009, in the World Cinema category, thus it can be retained in the census on a technicality. See: http://qporit.blogspot.co.uk/2009/09/hamptons-international-film-festival.html [Accessed 19th May 2017].

[115] A seventh Hindi film, *Do Dooni Chaar* (2010b), is missing from the census as it only appeared to be shown at the 2011 New York Indian Film Festival before a wider release through the Disney World Cinema DVD strand. See: http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/new-york-indian-film-festival-166252 [Accessed: 19th May 2017]. Although following the previous footnote, it should probably be

since *Treasure Island* (1950b), but until 'it acquired a controlling stake in UTV, a leading broadcasting, film and media company' (Bhushan, 2016) in 2012, Disney had always produced films for a primary US market. With the UTV partnership, Disney focused on productions for release in India, with some being afforded limited US releases.

While uniting the power of the Disney brand and Bollywood filmmaking might have looked like an excellent idea on paper, it has not translated into sustainable success, with the resultant films being relative flops, accruing middling-to-poor critical reviews. Thus the underperforming UTV releases, coupled with *The Jungle Book* (2016f) becoming the highest-grossing film ever in India, has resulted in Disney 'shifting its focus from local-language features to marketing its Hollywood slate' (Bhushan, 2016) in India.

5.8 Conclusion: Defining the TDG

Analysis of the common attributes of 390 Disney films released between 1937 and 2015 has shown that the Tangible Disney Genre has evolved, and continues to evolve. However, there are attributes of the TDG that are common to the majority of Disney films, and these are illustrated in Table 9 (overleaf).

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included in the census, this information was discovered too late. Finding robust information about Disney's minor releases such as documentaries and international productions is a tricky business.

TDG Attribute	Explanation
Suitable for all ages	No *explicit* violence, sex scenes, profanities or disturbing horror.
Live-action	Most likely to be live-action rather than animated by ratio of 3:1.
Humour	Drama generally tempered with a light touch if not all out comedy.
Fantasy	Light fantasy, not necessarily set in the real world, good triumphs over bad.
Adventure	Exciting stories set on Earth/in space/in the past; with special effects.
White lead characters	Whether animal or human, lead actors are likely to be white.
Male lead characters	Female leads occasionally, although without agency.
Heterosexual characters	No characters who are explicitly LGBT+.
Original or adapted	Either an original story or based on existing literature/story.

Table 9: Attributes of traditional Tangible Disney Genre

These attributes share several of the characteristics described by Janet Wasko as part of 'Classic Disney' in *Understanding Disney* (2001c), but there are also differences. The TDG attributes referred to here are taken from a systematic review of every Disney film released between 1937 and 2015, whereas Wasko's data is not so evidently systematic and comprehensive. Where Wasko points to stories in 'Classic Disney' as being 'often revised fairy tales or folklore' (2001c, p.114), my data shows six films based on folklore and legend, and only a handful more based on fairy tales – a third of Disney stories have been based on original stories and another third on existing materials drawn from a much wider range than just fairy tales.

Wasko notes that 'Classic Disney' characters are 'anthropomorphized, neotenized animal characters' (2001c, p.114) while my data determines that

only 19% of Disney films feature such animal characters in prominent roles. Although Wasko notes the stereotypical representations of gender and ethnicity, she also fails to acknowledge Disney's failings regarding sexuality. And while Wasko includes descriptions of themes/values present in 'Classic Disney' – including individualism, optimism and good over evil (2001c, p.114) – these themes/values are not backed up with statistical evidence. 'Classic Disney' as described by Wasko, despite not including animation as a characteristic, seems more useful for describing Disney's animated Classics than the wider Disney canon.

However, the attributes drawn from the present research and listed in Table 9 do not tell the whole Disney story either. The TDG of 2015 is different from the TDG of the 1930s, 1940s, and even the 1990s. The differences are exemplified by the films of Disney's recently acquired studios, Marvel and Lucasfilm, although I believe that the biggest changes to the TDG originated in the early 2000s, around the release of *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* (2003g) and the 2005 appointment of Bob Iger as the CEO of the Walt Disney Company, and that these differences point to a modern evolution of the TDG: the TDG 2.0.

5.8.1 TDG 2.0

The traditional TDG meant films that were suitable for audiences of all ages, often referred to as 'family audiences', where family is code meaning inclusive of children. These family films were considered safe for very young children to watch unsupervised, containing no explicit violence, sex scenes or challenging content. Such films are conservative in nature in terms of representation, peopled by white, heterosexual characters, led by men, with women in lesser roles of power and importance. Traditional TDG films might be based on children's literature, fairy tales, or original stories.

In the early 2000s the TDG began a process of evolution that is ongoing. This TDG 2.0 has seen the introduction of PG-13 certificate films to the TDG, which bring with them more violent and challenging content, along with a few choice profanities. TDG 2.0 is more likely to throw up surprises and anomalies,

such as more documentaries, sports dramas and Hindi films, meaning that the TDG is more difficult to pin down. Films released as part of TDG 2.0 are more likely to be sequels and form part of a wider universe of films, such as the MCU. Representation has diversified, becoming less conservative in allowing female leads (and directors) to have more agency, and beginning to address the lack of BME and LGBT+ representation in the traditional TDG.

Perhaps TDG 2.0 could be better described as the TDG with a social conscience. The safe, white, male-driven, heteronormative fantasies of the traditional TDG begin to look old-fashioned in the 21st century, if not downright offensive. Thus to maintain relevance in the seemingly more liberated Western world, Disney films have had to adapt. The pushback by Disney executives against Johnny Depp's camp portrayal of Captain Jack Sparrow in *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* and the subsequent resounding success of the film and its franchise can be seen as a turning point (Shoard, 2010). Later, the success of the unstoppable *Frozen* (2013a) took Disney by surprise, so much so that initial stocks of merchandise sold out (Wood, 2014), proving that bonds of female filial love could carry a Disney film.

When Disney's attempts to get a TDG 2.0 action-oriented franchise off the ground to attract male audiences stalled with the underperformance of *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*, *John Carter*, and *Oz the Great and Powerful*, they instead bought Marvel and Lucasfilm, which brought the audiences Disney was looking for into cinemas. Implementation of a shared/expanded universe franchise approach with both the MCU and the new Star Wars saga has proved so successful and lucrative that rival Hollywood studios are copying the format. Marvel and Star Wars films also brought longer running times and PG-13 certificates to Disney that suggest they are seeking older audiences than the traditional TDG.

What particularly distinguishes the films of the TDG 2.0 is the marrying of nostalgia with novelty. The MCU, Star Wars and remakes of animated Classics all build on the nostalgic familiarity of the original films or sources – the songs of *Beauty and the Beast* (1991a), the comic book history of Captain America, an affinity for Han Solo – with new filmmaking technology, better representation, or new narrative perspectives. The results can be seen in the phenomenal box

office performances of Disney films in the last few years, and such results can only reinforce Disney's commitment to TDG 2.0, which has a future line-up of films based on remakes of animated Classics, the extended Star Wars and Marvel universes, plus Disneynature documentaries, sports dramas and the odd surprise package.

TDG 2.0 Attribute	Explanation
Generally suitable for all ages	Themes and violence may be too intense for youngest viewers. Minor swearing.
Live-action	Most likely to be live-action rather than animated by ratio of 3:1.
Humour	Drama generally tempered with a light touch if not all out comedy.
Fantasy	Light fantasy, not necessarily set in the real world, good triumphs over bad.
Adventure	Exciting stories set on Earth/in space/in the past; with special effects.
More racially diverse characters	Better approach to colour-blind casting than traditional TDG.
Mixed gender lead characters	Better representation for female characters, with more agency.
Heterosexual characters	LGBT+ characters probably not present, but more likely than in traditional TDG.
Remake or franchise	Strong likelihood film will be a remake of an animated classic or part of bigger franchise.

Table 10: Attributes of Tangible Disney Genre 2.0

The TDG 2.0 still prioritises comedy, fantasy and adventure above all other genres, as well as live-action, but the films of the TDG 2.0 are not guaranteed to be suitable for the youngest audiences; will likely be part of a bigger franchise or a remake; and will push at the boundaries of representation. However, such boundary pushing may be constrained by Disney's place in the global film market, for example in countries such as China, which is becoming

an important market for Hollywood films. China has no film certificate system and a more conservative approach to LGBT+ representation, for example. Thus if Disney, or any other studio, wants to make money in such countries they may need to curb their efforts at increasing minority representation.

As well as releasing new films that fall into the modern remit of the TDG 2.0, Disney continues to re-release and screen its older films on home media and television, thus the traditional TDG remains active and accessible to audiences. It is to these audiences that I will turn in Chapter 6, to explore the Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG) that is generated by the shared understandings and perceptions of audiences, and is fed by familiarity and interaction with the TDG in its traditional and modern (2.0) forms, as well as the wider world of Disney media.

Chapter 6
RQ2: How do adults perceive Disney films?
The Fantasy Disney Genre

6.1 Introduction

> You see, I'm not Disney any more. I used to be Disney, but now
> Disney is something we've built up in the public mind over the
> years. It stands for something, and you don't have to explain
> what it is to the public. They know what Disney is when they
> hear about our films or go to Disneyland. They know they're
> gonna get a certain quality, a certain kind of entertainment. And
> that's what Disney is.
>
> (Walt Disney, quoted in Thomas, 1994, p.279)

In this chapter I use qualitative and quantitative data drawn from the sample
survey (questionnaire), focus groups, and my own experiences as a Disney fan
to investigate the perception of Disney that, as Walt Disney acknowledged, has
been built up in the public mind. I call this shared public perception of Disney
films the Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG). As discussed in Chapter 5, Disney
prioritises its animated features ahead of almost all others (although since
Marvel and Star Wars became part of the Disney family that emphasis has
shifted; see section 5.8.1), so it is perhaps understandable that the FDG may be
inspired by audiences' mistaken impression that animation is all Disney does.
That may have been true before 1950, the year Disney produced its first fully
live-action feature, but does Disney still mean animation to audiences today?

Chapter 6 draws on empirical data from 3,524 participants from the
sample survey, 34 focus group participants, and my own autoethnographic
experiences to discover the shared perceptions of Disney films held by
audiences today. The global reach and large response to the sample survey
allow me to make broad claims about the audience perceptions of Disney films.
Asking audiences about why they choose to watch Disney films or choose not
to, as well as their reasons for enjoying Disney films or otherwise, will reveal

much about their perceptions of the Disney film genre. Through this analysis I will be able to build up a picture of the FDG, which can then be compared with the TDG described in Chapter 5. This comparison will take place in Chapter 7.

The investigation into adult perceptions of Disney films begins with a case study of my own personal experiences to contextualise the FDG, before widening the scope to take in a broader audience drawn from the sample survey and focus groups. Discussion of the sample survey results begins with an overview of quantitative, statistical data, before bringing in qualitative audience data[116] to probe these quantitative observations in greater detail and to consider the reasons why adult audiences enjoy or do not enjoy Disney films. In the chapter's conclusion I will describe the themes and tropes that comprise the Fantasy Disney Genre.

6.2 A Personal Case Study: Perceptions of Disney Films

My own perceptions of Disney have been forming since I was a child on rare trips to the cinema to see re-released and new animated Classics. I cannot recall the first Disney film I saw, but I do remember having a VHS copy of *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), recorded from the television, that I watched until it wore out. I later collected the animated Classics on pre-recorded videos, and we took family trips to Disneyland Paris in the mid-1990s and Walt Disney World (WDW), Florida in the summer of 2000 when I was 16. The latter was an extra special treat – a two week holiday – a luxury for a farming family.

I do not remember either myself or my sister badgering our parents for these Disney parks visits, nor were my parents particular fans of Disney, although my Dad has told me how the BBC Bank Holiday television special *Disney Time* (1964-1994) afforded him exciting, rare glimpses of Disney films as a child. I am sure that my parents' decisions to take us to the Disney parks

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[116] Direct quotations from participants are anonymous, but include demographic information for illustration purposes. Quotations from the questionnaire include the respondent's self-reported gender (Female, Male, Other), age group (18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45+), and nationality, while data from focus groups may omit age group unless known. Quotations are provided with only minimal edits for spelling.

and to build my Disney video collection were more about keeping us entertained than any inter-generational sharing of love for Disney.

Disney films and animation continue to bring me pleasure today. As an adult I have made a return visit to both Disneyland Paris and WDW, most recently to the latter in 2014, just prior to commencing the current research. On that occasion, my husband and I spent two whole weeks at the WDW resort and treated ourselves to an adults-only day-long backstage tour of the parks. As enjoyable as the Disney theme parks are, I could not revisit regularly as some do, as there are plenty of other (cheaper) holiday destinations that I have yet to experience. However, I very much enjoy the thrills to be found riding rollercoasters, watching live shows, and admiring the overall operation of the Disney parks. On honeymoon I was lucky enough to visit San Francisco's Walt Disney Family Museum, which is filled with memorabilia and artwork from the life of Walt Disney, and feels much more adult-orientated than the theme parks.

But the theme parks, with their distance from Leeds and their attendant expenses, are still treats, sideshows to the main event of Disney films themselves, which remain much more readily accessible. As a child I viewed the films uncritically, enjoying the animation, singing along with the catchy songs, and getting lost in their worlds. I collected stuffed toys of the animated characters, and subscribed to *The Lion King: A Nature Fun and Learn Series* (1995-1997) magazine. I also enjoyed some of Disney's live-action output of the mid-1990s, including *Hocus Pocus* (1993c), *Muppet Treasure Island* (1996e) and *Cool Runnings* (1993b). I consider myself lucky to have grown up during the Disney Renaissance, which began in 1989, and to have experienced *Aladdin* (1992a) and *The Lion King* (1994b) as a child. As an adult I continue to see new releases at the cinema, and I have continued to collect Disney films on DVD and Blu-ray (I find the experience of collecting the films on physical media almost as pleasurable as watching the films themselves).

A recent exchange when I sold a Disney DVD on eBay reminded me of the way adults who like Disney are often made to feel. Following the auction, an unsuccessful bidder contacted me to ask whether I had any other such items for sale. When I told him that I had other Disney DVDs, but that they were not for sale, he noted that it was 'Nice to know there is someone as sad as me

collecting them lol', and in further correspondence he noted that his work colleagues found this behaviour 'sad'. Being a fan of Disney and their films can be a tricky business, leaving you open for ridicule by others, so I recognise this bidder's tactic of acknowledging his 'sadness' up front before anyone could make fun of him.

As a gay man I have experienced ridicule and felt the pressure to conform and keep hidden the things that bring me pleasure from the wider world, and this experience is not dissimilar from that I have felt in taking pleasure from Disney (and other sources of entertainment). But just as I have learned to overcome the internalised homophobia of my teenage years, I have learned to take my pleasures from whichever media I like, and to be up-front about them, recognising that the problems lie with those who judge me.

I would also suggest that I still view the films uncritically in many ways, being dazzled by the animation and songs, or charmed by the wholesome stories, in a way that is well removed from some of the more serious, gory or unsettling worlds of non-Disney films (or real life, for that matter). I do enjoy many different genres and permutations of film, but there is something safe and reassuring about a Disney film, whether it is a favourite or a new discovery. I am aware that some people find the films problematic for reasons that will be explored further below, but I am able to accept that Disney films are a fantasy, and are not necessarily representing an ideal to strive for, or holding a mirror up to the world.

As a gay man, it does not trouble me unduly that Disney's track record of representing non-heterosexual identities in its films has been poor; at least it does not prevent me from taking pleasure in such films. As audiences have always done, I draw on my own particular experiences to interpret the films. For example, the animated Classic *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996c), not considered one of Disney's more successful releases, is one that I keep returning to (even just to listen to the soundtrack). This adaptation of Victor Hugo's novel presents darker themes than many would expect to find in a Disney film, as a shocked pilot focus group of undergraduates discovered when I screened the film for them.

The film resonates with me because of the hunchback's desire for acceptance by the wider world, as expressed in the song 'Out There', which features the chorus: 'Out there / Where they all live unaware / What I'd give / What I'd dare / Just to live one day out there' (Menken, 1996). That desire for acceptance is one many (gay) people know well, and songs like this allow me to forge connections with Disney films on a deeper level than when I was a child. I do not find this deeper connection with all Disney films, but this example serves to show that everyone has their own experiences with Disney films, informed by their own personal circumstances, which will then inform their perceptions of the FDG.

Experience has shown me that I am not alone in enjoying the pleasures of Disney at the cinema, at the theme parks and in Disney Stores without the accompaniment of children, and that my adult interest in Disney is not unique, but it is problematic for some. This interest is what lead me, eventually, to an academic focus on Disney. Of course, my own experiences only represent a limited case study, but I believe that such experiences are not unique to me, thus I now turn my attention to over 3,500 other adult audience members who participated in my research to find out their perceptions of Disney films.

6.3 Overview of Statistical Data

In section 6.3 I review some of the quantitative results generated by the sample survey, highlighting some important areas to discuss further in sections 6.4 and 6.5, which draw upon both qualitative data from both the survey and focus groups. The statistical data, which draws on responses from 3,524 respondents worldwide, is of a significant size to allow me to make some broad claims about common perceptions of Disney films among the adult film-going population. These claims will be expanded upon with reference to qualitative data in subsequent sections.

It should be noted that this data represents those adults who had access to the internet in order to answer the survey, as well as those willing to spend 10-15 minutes completing it. The survey was shared (among other places) via academic mailing lists with a media focus, thus many of the respondents might

be expected to know a little about media and have more informed, nuanced views on Disney and their films than non-academics might, but that does not mean that their views are not valuable.

6.3.1 Demographics of Respondents
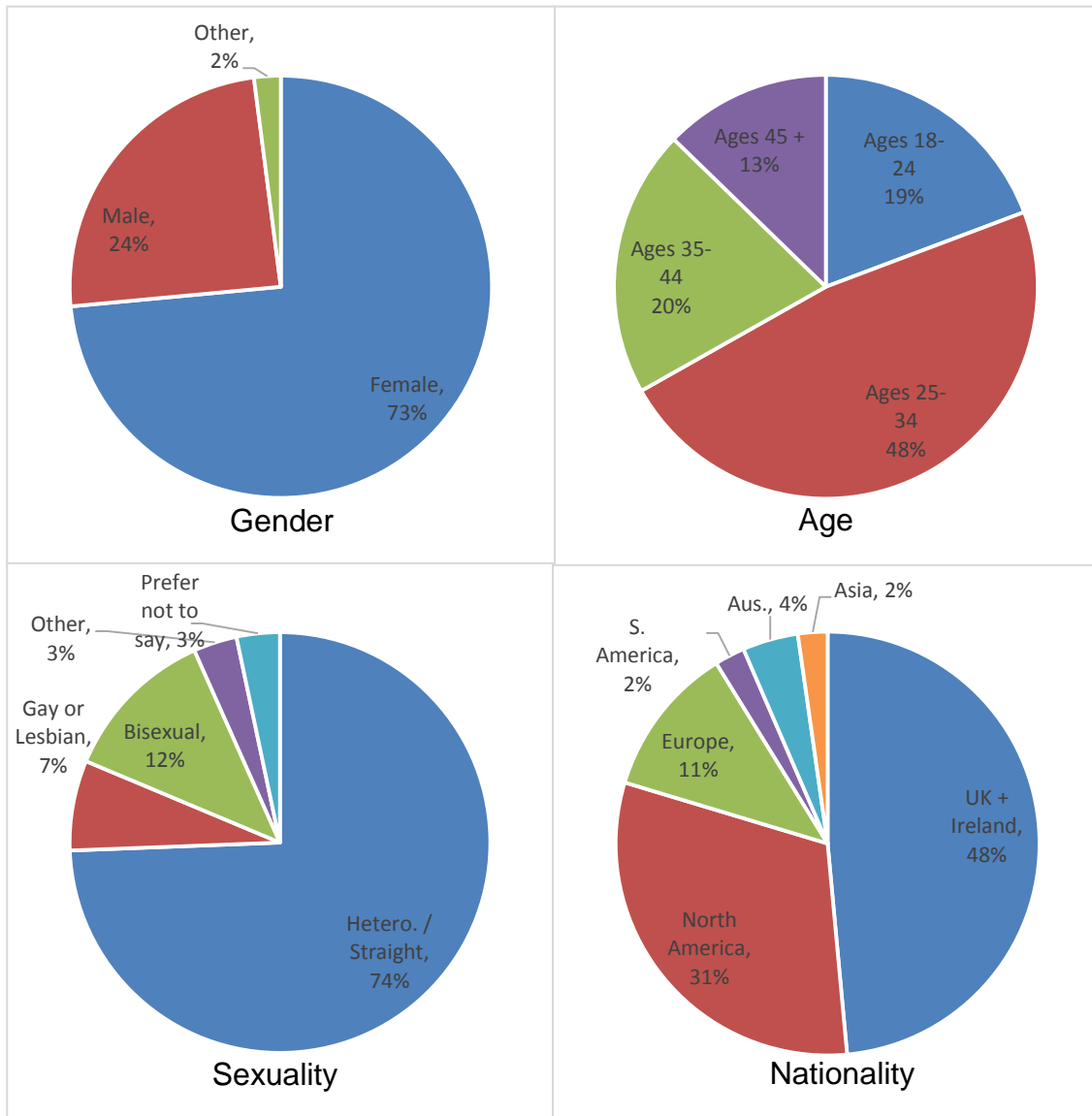
Figure 20: Demographics of respondents (Questions 18, 20, 21 & 23)
Source: Sample survey responses.

The charts in Figure 20 illustrate self-reported demographic information relating to the survey's respondents. It should be noted that this data does not indicate

who the audiences for Disney films are, indeed it may say more about the type of people who are willing to spend time filling out an online survey about Disney than it does about Disney films themselves (although only 38% of respondents reported that they had previously completed an online quiz relating to Disney[117]). That being said, it is interesting that almost ¾ of respondents were women, particularly when considering answers to the question 'who are the target audiences for Disney films?' as seen below.
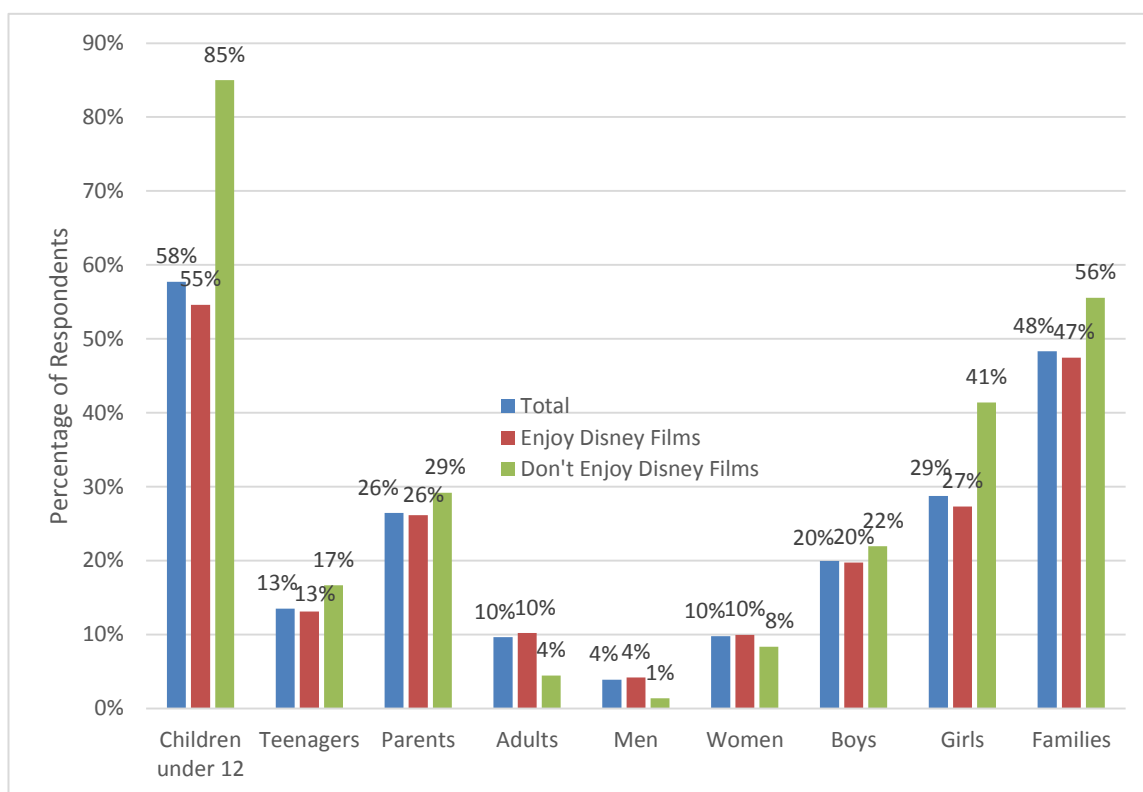
Figure 21: Perceived target audiences for Disney films (Question 4)
Source: Sample survey responses.

Figure 21 shows that 10% of total respondents selected women, and 4% men, as the target audiences for Disney films, while 29% selected girls and 20% boys. Even more revealing are the differences in the figures selected by respondents who said that they do not enjoy Disney films, with 41% of this group picking girls as Disney's target audience, and just 22% boys, with only

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[117] Completing an online quiz related to Disney was provided as one of the options to choose from in Question 7: Which of the following have you done as an adult?

1% believing that Disney films are aimed at men. The other discrepancy shown by those who do not enjoy Disney films is that 85% of them believe that Disney films are for children under 12, as opposed to just 55% of respondents who do enjoy Disney films. One might conclude that those who perceive Disney films to be synonymous with animated princesses, rather than documentaries or sports dramas, would choose children and girls as target audiences.

Almost half of respondents were aged 25-34 – the prevalence of this age group is unsurprising as statistics published by the BFI have shown that the 25-34 share of cinema admissions has been greater than the share of other age groups since 2003 (BFI, 2016, p.178). It therefore makes sense that the age group most likely to visit the cinema are also the age group most likely to complete my film-related survey. Perhaps due to the majority of the respondents belonging to a younger age group, only 29% reported sharing their household with children aged 17 and under[118].

Almost a quarter of respondents identified as LGBT+, reflecting data from a recent YouGov poll which found that '23% of British people choose something other than 100% heterosexual' (Dahlgreen and Shakespeare, 2015) when asked to place themselves on the Kinsey scale of sexuality. The proportion of LGBT+ respondents in my survey remains around a quarter for both genders (although men were more likely to identify as gay, while women were more likely to be bisexual). 25% of those who said that they enjoy Disney films identified as LGBT+ but 33% of those who do not enjoy Disney films identified this way. Disney's poor record of LGBT+ representation may be to blame for this increased hostility towards Disney films from LGBT+ respondents.

Altogether, representatives of 71 different countries completed the questionnaire, of whom almost half were from the UK and Republic of Ireland[119], around a third were from the US, a further tenth were European, and

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[118] I specifically asked about children in the household rather than asking whether the respondent had children in order to take into account siblings, grandchildren, and stepchildren.

[119] Following the BFI's conventions, the data covers 'the Republic of Ireland as well as the UK, which distributors usually treat as a single distribution territory' (BFI, 2016, p.16). The UK and Republic of Ireland data were compiled from those respondents who selected the following nationalities from the list provided: British (1,555), English (32), Scottish (37), Welsh (34), Northern Irish (2), and Irish (43).

the rest ranged from Argentina to Zimbabwe. Comparing the UK and Ireland data with the data from the survey as a whole indicates that there are few statistically significant differences between the British and Irish responses and those of the rest of the world. The same basic pattern of answers, with a few statistically insignificant differences here and there, is reassuring as it means that the attitudes expressed in the survey are more likely to be broadly generalizable.

6.3.2 General Attitudes to Films

As well as asking respondents about Disney films specifically, my survey included several questions about general film watching habits to provide an overview of my respondents' attitudes to the medium beyond Disney. In answer to Question 13 (how do you feel about watching films in general?), 91% of respondents said that they gain pleasure from watching films, and this figure decreased slightly with age. And while 91% of British respondents reported taking such pleasure, 97% of non-British respondents do so – perhaps this is indicative of British cynicism? 17% of those who do not enjoy Disney films also revealed that they do not enjoy films generally, suggesting a correlation between the two dislikes.

When presented with further options for experiencing films, 77% said they like to watch films with friends or family, and 72% reported that they find watching films a relaxing experience, as shown in Figure 22 (overleaf). Less than 10% of respondents said that they do not have time or patience to watch films, or just generally have no interest in the medium. In the open 'Other' category, several respondents took the opportunity to clarify that they are selective about their film choices, either for matters of taste or time constraints. The overall picture seems to be that the majority enjoy a good film, as long as they have the time and the economic and social resources to spend on it.
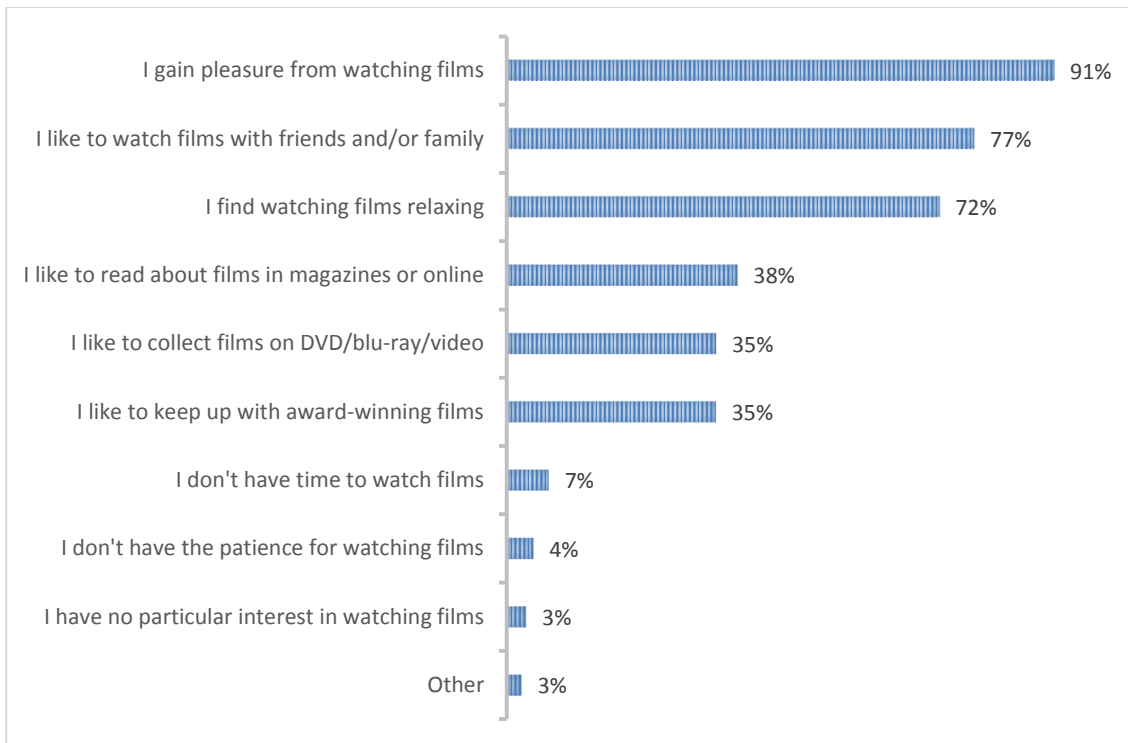
Figure 22: How audiences feel about watching films generally (Question 13)

Source: Sample survey responses.

Figure 12 (section 5.3.5) showed that 96% of respondents had watched a film at least once in the cinema, and 90% had seen a film at least once both on home media and via streaming. Table 11 shows the collated responses for all 3,524 respondents to Question 14: how often do you watch films in the following ways? It shows that while trips to the cinema are rare for the majority of respondents, they watch films at home far more frequently, although they are less likely to watch them through either pay TV or free-to-air TV than via physical home media and streaming.

	Daily	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less than once a month	Never	Don't Know
Cinema	0%	4%	28%	64%	3%	1%
Physical home media	4%	26%	29%	31%	9%	1%
Streaming	15%	35%	26%	14%	10%	0%
Pay TV	4%	10%	10%	16%	60%	1%
Free-to-air TV	4%	14%	22%	27%	30%	4%

Table 11: How often audiences watch films (Question 14)

Source: Sample survey responses.

Question 17 asked respondents to name the last film they watched, and where they watched it. There was an expectedly wide variety of responses, and only two films were watched by over 200 respondents, *Deadpool* (2016c) and *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015k), with the next most popular film, *Captain America: Civil War* (2016b) seen by 83 respondents. 36% had watched a film last at the cinema, and 31% had streamed one, and these figures seem to contradict slightly the impression given in Question 14 that cinema is a less popular vehicle for delivering films to audiences than streaming or home media. The range of responses to this question, as well as the fact that the R/15 certificate *Deadpool* was the most popular choice, indicate that the survey had not been monopolised and unduly influenced by Disney fan/atics. This implies that the conclusions to be drawn from the survey responses are generalizable across the general film watching public, rather than just Disney fans.

Similarly, when Disney was provided as an option for Questions 15 and 16, only 3% chose it as their favourite genre, and 1% chose it as their least favourite genre, respectively. Again, this indicates that the survey was not hijacked by either Disney fanatics or antagonists. If the survey had been posted to a Disney fan site one might reasonably assume that Disney would be a more popular choice as favourite genre, but as this is not the case, accusations of bias in the data seem less likely. When given the opportunity at Question 24 to

provide any written responses relating to Disney films that they wished, a handful of respondents actually queried the inclusion of Disney (and animation) as a genre option in this question.

Respondents' most popular choice of favourite film genre was in fact 'no preference', followed by comedy at 13%, as can be seen in Figure 23. This is in contrast to respondents' least favourite film genre, which overwhelmingly favoured horror at 38%, while western came second on 14%, and 'no preference' just 8%. It seems that audiences are more confident in identifying films and genres that they do not like rather than ones they do, or perhaps that horror and western are more easily definable genre categories than action or thriller, for example, and thus easier to single out. Write-in choices of favourite genre included indie, world cinema and period drama, while least favourite genres included comic book films (which Disney's Marvel specialises in), zombie horror and sports (see section 5.4.5)[120].
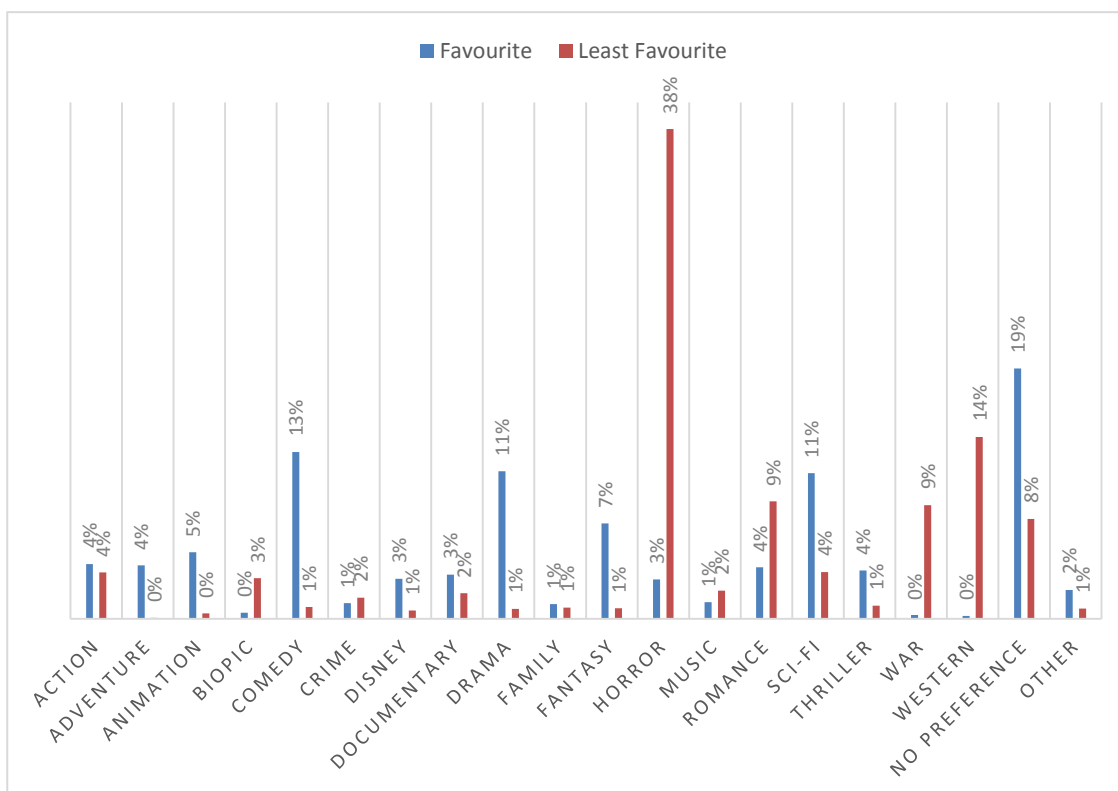
Figure 23: Favourite and least favourite film genres (Questions 15 & 16)

Source: Sample survey responses.

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[120] There was also one vote for 'Adam Sandler' in the least favourite film category. The divisive actor starred in Disney's *Bedtime Stories* (2008a), one of many Sandler films certified as 'rotten' (scoring <59% in aggregated critical reviews) by RottenTomatoes.com.

6.3.3 Relationships with Disney Films

Although only 3% of respondents chose Disney as their favourite film genre, 90% professed that they do generally enjoy Disney films as an adult (Question 8), with just 360 out of 3,524 people saying that they do not generally enjoy Disney films. The variety of responses to other questions in the survey indicate that, although broadly-speaking there are more people who enjoy Disney films than not, there are many different ways in which this enjoyment both manifests itself and is negotiated by audiences.

When asked how their experience of Disney films had changed since childhood, just over half of respondents said that their feelings had not changed, while a similar percentage claimed to enjoy Disney films more as an adult (20%) as those who claimed to enjoy Disney films less (24%). Just 3% reported that they did not watch Disney films as an adult. It is worth reiterating that respondents were not provided with a definition of Disney film during the survey, therefore these responses are based on their own perception of Disney films, which were expectedly biased towards animation[121]. For example, some of those 90 people who professed not to watch Disney films in adulthood may well have unwittingly watched a film like *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* without realising that Disney owns the studio that produced it.

Similarly, only 6 respondents reported in Question 6 that they had never (knowingly) watched a Disney film, which either speaks to a restricted ability to access films generally or ignorance of the range of films produced by Disney (I suspect the latter). For the same question, 84% reported that they had watched Disney films as children, which is perhaps a surprisingly low number given Disney's supposed ubiquity in family viewing. There was a disparity between respondents from the UK and Ireland and the rest of the world, with 82% of British and Irish saying they had watched Disney films as a child compared with 92% of international audiences. It is unclear why this disparity may have

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[121] From Question 10 onwards respondents were asked to think about the different studios within WDS, such as Pixar, Marvel and Lucasfilm. Once the survey has been completed, a final Thank You page provided more information about the different studios that have been part of WDS for respondents wishing to find out more information. Several respondents expressed annoyance about the lack of definition of Disney when given the chance to provide a written response in Question 24.

occurred, as Disney films are as accessible, if not more so, in the UK/Ireland as in the rest of the world.

Figure 24 shows that 62% of respondents enjoy watching classic Disney films (again, respondents were responsible for their interpretation of 'classic Disney films'), and 51% look forward to new Disney films, which given that 90% generally enjoy Disney films seems a strangely low percentage. While 11% of those who enjoy Disney films only tend to watch them with their family or partner, 35% of those who do not enjoy Disney films are forced to endure them with their loved ones.
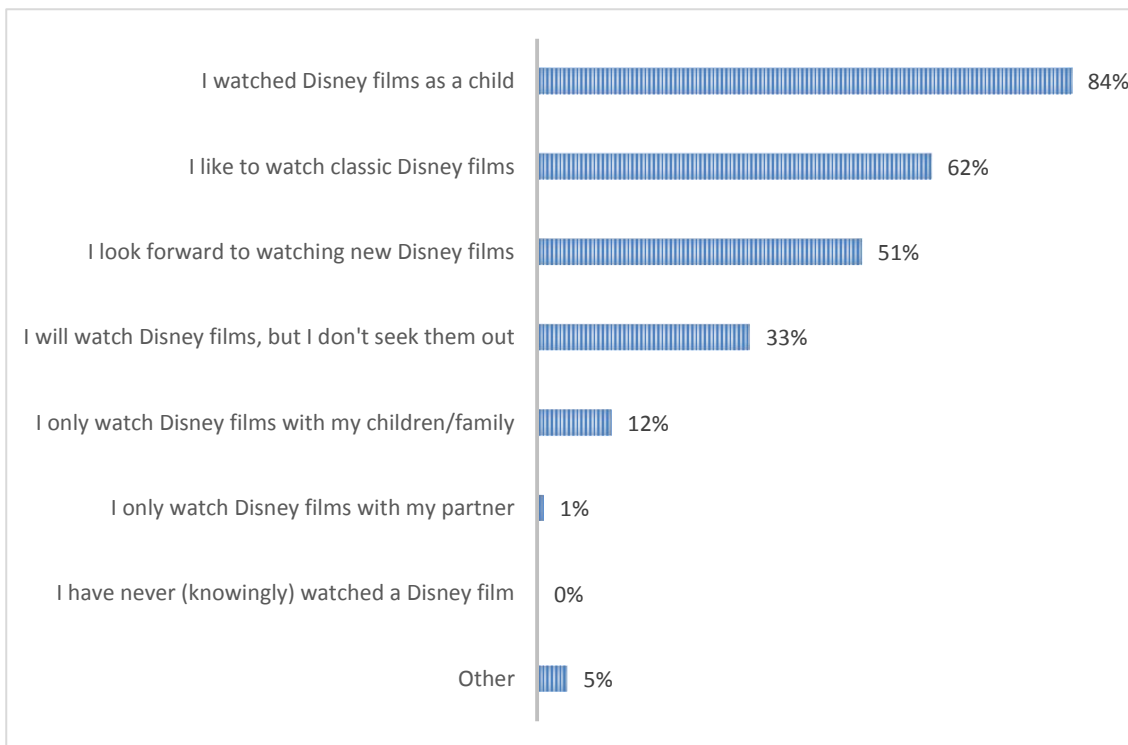
Figure 24: Experiences of watching Disney films (Question 6)

Source: Sample survey responses.

Asked what factors might influence someone to watch a Disney film (Question 5), over half opted for friends or the film's trailer, advert or poster, as seen in Figure 25. Few people are influenced in their choice of Disney film by the film's director compared to other film attributes such as genre, soundtrack or familiarity with the story. It is not clear from this data whether film directors are

generally less important factors for audiences when choosing a film to watch, or whether Disney particularly is not a studio associated with famous or prestigious directors. It is worth noting that although Disney films have collectively won 53 Academy Awards, none of them have been in the category of Best Director.

When Walt Disney ran the studio, his name as producer was used to promote films above all other credits, and directors were found in-house, rather than employing any household names – Alfred Hitchcock, Frank Capra or Billy Wilder never helmed a Walt Disney production, for example. Today, even though well-known directors such as Tim Burton, Sam Raimi and even David Lynch have directed films for Disney, their films are still marketed and publicised to the general public using Disney branding, rather than relying on the reputation of their directors.

Category	Percentage
Trailer, advert or poster	57%
Friends	56%
Genre of the film	39%
Reviews by critics	38%
The Disney name	36%
Children	35%
Soundtrack/music	33%
Familiarity with the story	33%
Partner	28%
Actor(s) in the film	24%
Film director	13%
Other	5%
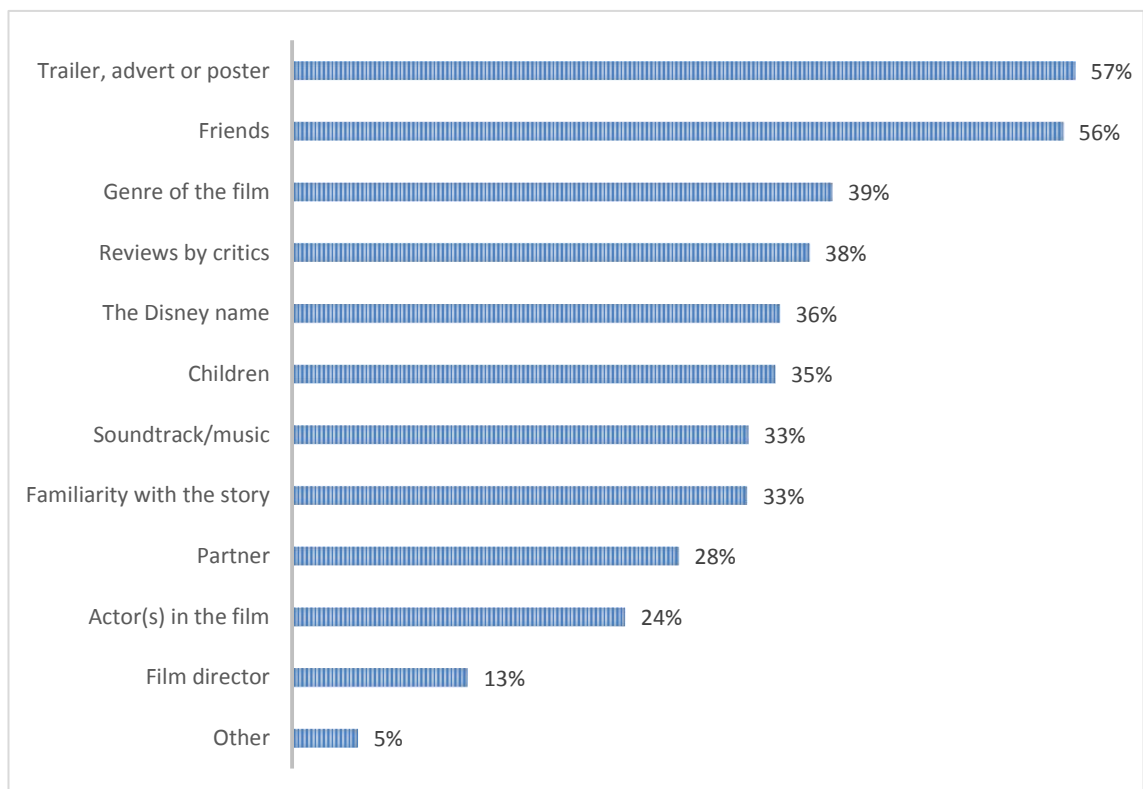
Figure 25: Influences on the decision to watch a Disney film (Question 5)

Source: Sample survey responses.

Respondents' likelihood of being influenced by a film's trailer, advert or poster means that Disney's marketing and publicity departments have a

responsibility to pitch the film to fit in with the perception of Disney held by audiences. If a trailer or poster does not leave the viewer with a clear indication of how the film fits into the FDG it could have a harder time reaching an audience. Conversely, the influence of friends in choosing a film to watch – either through word-of-mouth feedback or through watching a film in their company – suggests that adherence to the FDG may be less important. Or one might conclude that friends in a particular social circle may share the same understanding of the FDG, thus it is easier for them to agree on whether to watch a particular Disney film. For social viewing, a Disney film is a safe option, with a lack of horror, violence and objectionable content.

Question 7 (Figure 26) asked respondents to identify from a list of choices all of the Disney film related activities that they had engaged in as adults. 64% admitted that they had watched Disney films at the cinema, without being accompanied by children, while only 37% had taken children to the cinema to watch a Disney film. That the majority had been to the cinema without children is surprising given the association of Disney with family and children's films. Anecdotally, when I see Disney films at the cinema the number of unaccompanied adults, especially at screenings of animated films, is significant. However, I have noticed that Vue cinema's audio warning to keep quiet that precedes the film is adapted for animated films, specifically addressing parents and children and disregarding the child-free audience.

There are several discrepancies in the answers to Question 7 when different demographics are taken into consideration. For example, 61% of British and Irish respondents said that they had seen a Disney film at the cinema without children, compared with 71% of the rest of the world. It might be surmised that attending the cinema to watch a Disney (animated) film without children is considered to be less socially acceptable by British/Irish audiences. The likelihood of watching a film at the cinema without children decreases with age, as 76% of 18-24 year olds have done so, compared to 46% of those aged 45+. Of those who profess not to enjoy Disney films, 20% had still watched one at the cinema without children, perhaps being dragged there by friends or partners (see Figure 24).
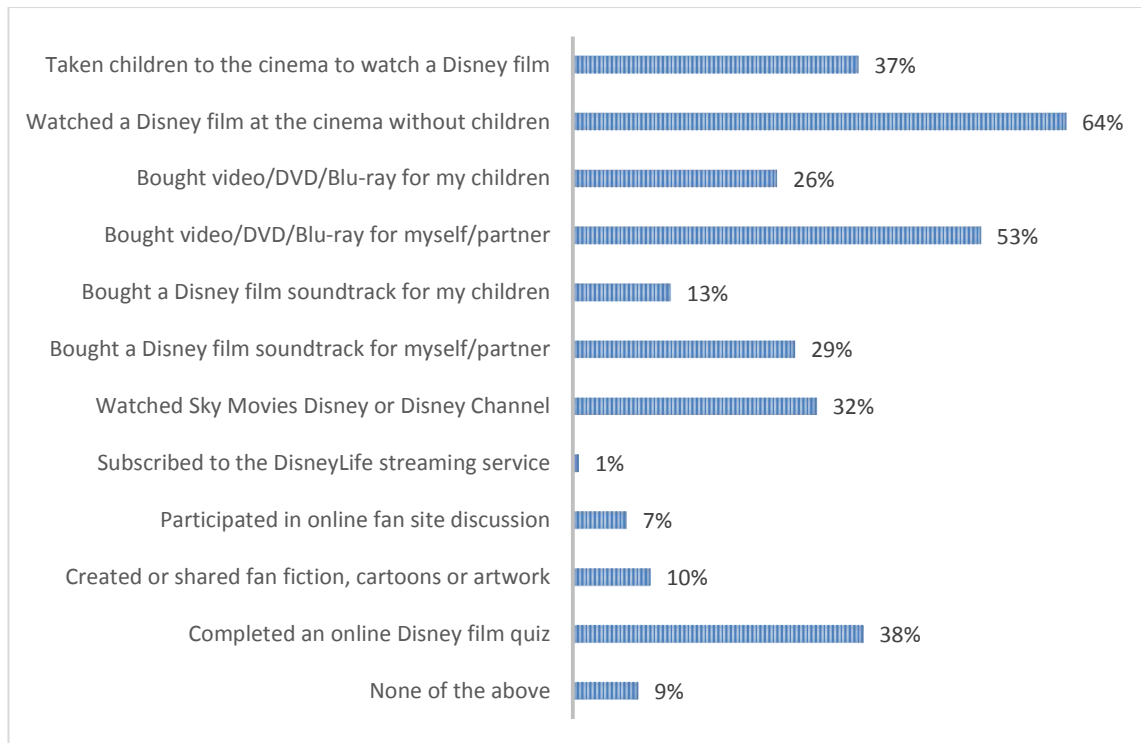
Figure 26: Disney film activities engaged in as an adult (Question 7)[122]

Source: Sample survey responses.

Over half of respondents had bought themselves or their partner Disney films on physical home media, while 29% had also bought soundtrack albums for themselves or their partner (data on music streaming was not sought). Although 60% had professed to never watching films on pay TV, 32% said that they had watched Disney films on Disney Channel or Sky Movies Disney. Just 10% had created or shared fan fiction, cartoons or artwork relating to Disney films, and 7% had participated in online fan site discussion of Disney films. 9% of respondents had not participated in any of the provided Disney film related activities – this figure fell to 5% for those respondents who enjoy Disney films and rose to 44% for those who do not. Despite not enjoying Disney films it would appear that familial and social obligations render them unavoidable for some respondents.

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[122] Responses have been edited for brevity. All options provided for respondents to choose from explicitly referred to Disney films, for example: 'Bought *Disney films on* video/DVD/Blu-ray for my children'.

6.3.4 Perceptions of Disney Films

Since 90% of adult respondents claim to generally enjoy Disney films, and as many of them have participated in a variety of Disney film related activities, one might conclude that each respondent has their own understanding of what a Disney film is. Question 3 asked respondents to identify the genre(s) that they would normally associate with Disney films, and the results are illustrated in Figure 27.
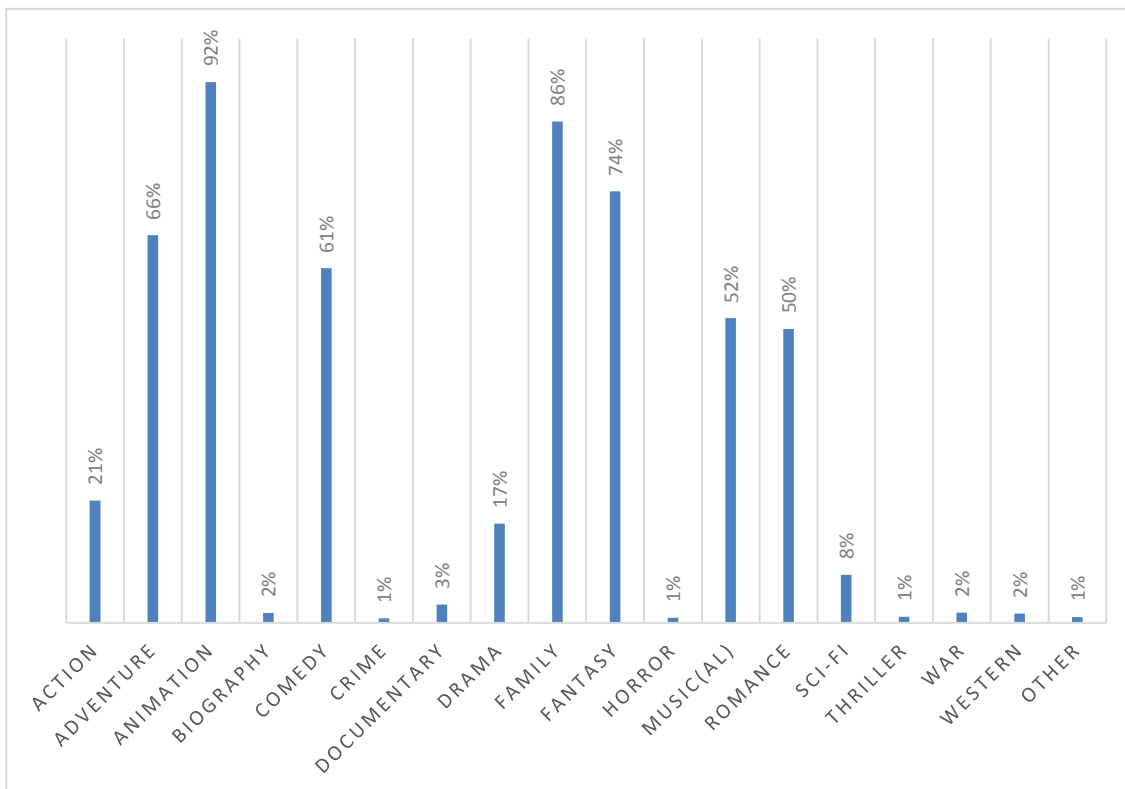
Figure 27: Genres associated with Disney films (Question 3)

Source: Sample survey responses.

92% of respondents chose animation as the genre they associated with Disney, with family not far behind on 86%, and fantasy, adventure and comedy all chosen by more than 60% of respondents. Conversely, the crime, horror, thriller, war and western genres were only associated with Disney films by fewer than 2% of respondents. Evident biases therefore indicate that Disney's animated Classics most strongly represent audience perceptions of Disney films.
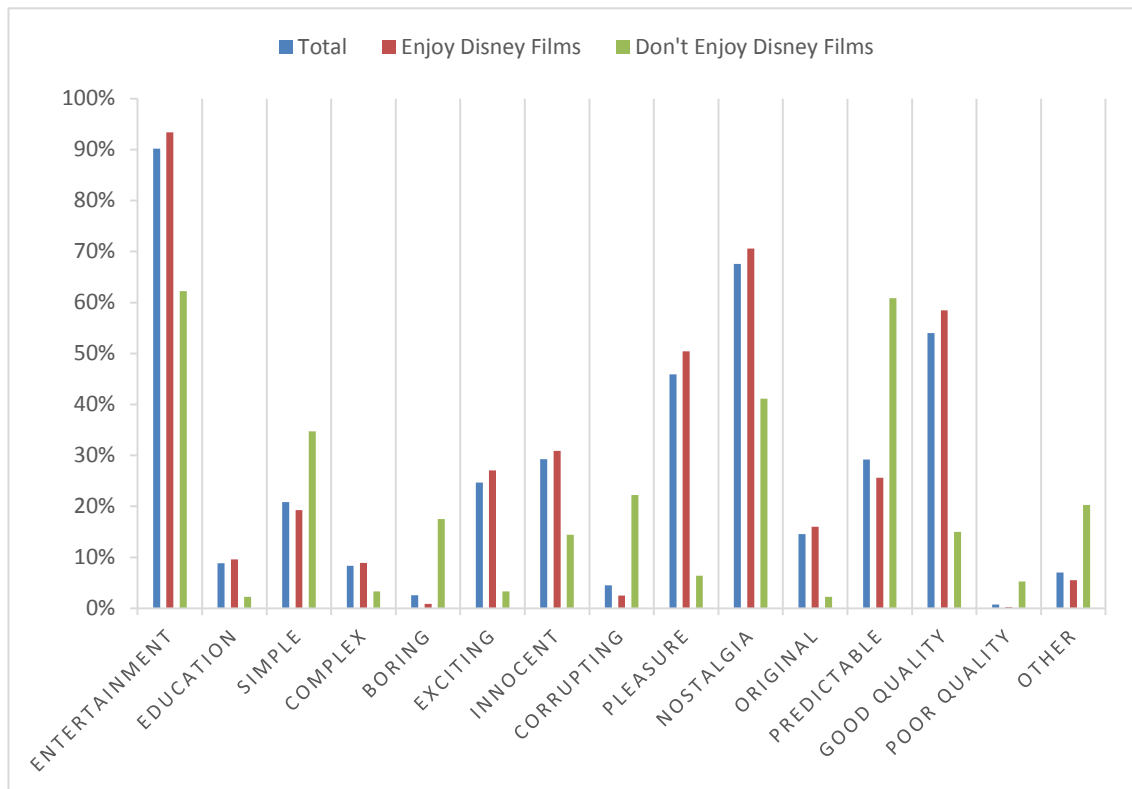
Figure 28: What the term 'Disney film' means to respondents (Question 2)

Source: Sample survey responses.

Beyond generic film categories, respondents were also asked to select from a given list those concepts that they thought were most relevant to the term 'Disney film' (without the concept being defined for them). Figure 28 shows data for the entire cohort, as well as being split by those who said that they enjoy Disney films and those who said that they do not. Although both groups associate Disney with entertainment, those who do not like Disney films are more likely to associate them with being simple, predictable, boring and corrupting, while those who enjoy Disney films are more apt to think of them as exciting, innocent, nostalgic and a source of pleasure. While those who like Disney films strongly consider them to be of good quality, those who do not like them do not rate Disney films highly for quality. However, such respondents do not overwhelmingly consider them to be of poor quality, which suggests that the films themselves are considered competent in creation, but not in content.

The respondents selecting 'other' for this question provided responses that ranged from neutral ('for children', 'musical', or 'animation') to positive ('fun', 'magical', or referencing artistic merits) or negative (racist/sexist/homophobic, 'commercial', or 'sentimental'). Nostalgia proved to be an important association with Disney films for 68% of total respondents, implying that their perceptions of Disney are tied up with memories of childhood, and thus may be unduly influenced by animated films.

Audience perceptions of Disney films can also be gleaned in the answers to the follow-up sub-questions from Question 8: do you generally enjoy watching Disney films as an adult? Depending on whether the respondent answered positively or negatively, they were presented with a list of options from which to choose the reasons that they do or do not enjoy watching Disney films.

6.3.4.1 Positive Perceptions

Considering that 58% of respondents who enjoy Disney films associate them with good quality (Question 2), it is unsurprising that 62% also chose the fact that they are usually well made as the top reason for enjoying Disney films (Figure 29). However, although a film's production quality is considered important by a majority of audiences, answers to Question 5 about what influences someone's decision to watch a Disney film showed that the director and cast were not particularly important to most audiences (cf. Figure 25). It may be that the 55% of respondents who said that they enjoy animated films are represented in the 62% who think Disney films are well made, and that 'well made' in this context means animated to a high standard (or aesthetically pleasing) rather than well made in terms of script, direction and performance. Thus the association of animation with Disney films is once more revealed.

Men were notably more likely to point out the quality of a film (71%) as important compared to women (59%). I would speculate that referencing the craft of filmmaking rather than emotional responses to Disney films is a more traditional position for male audiences to take. Pointing out artistic merits and the quality of a film may also be considered to be a more adult response, which

younger viewers, unversed in how films are made, are less likely to hold in high regard. An appreciation of artistic merits is therefore an acceptable way to enjoy animated, family films – allowing audiences an intellectual response, rather than one based purely on (childish?) emotion.

Nostalgia is another big draw for those who enjoy Disney films, and nostalgia is a key part of the TDG 2.0. Over half of respondents also indicated that they liked animated films, and half again expect Disney films to be easy viewing, implying that they do not expect to be challenged emotionally or intellectually by Disney films. A film that is easy to watch might also be considered to be one that is not going to be upsetting or scary, an outcome that is appreciated by 9% of respondents.
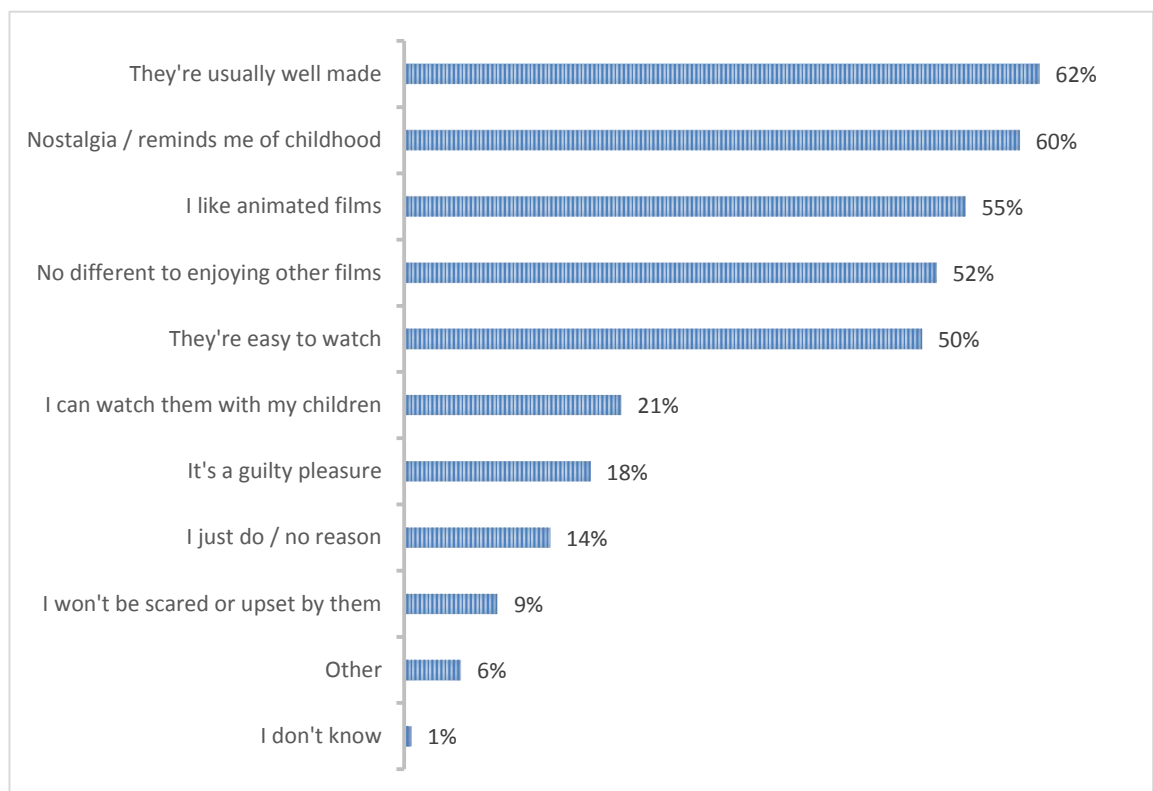
Figure 29: Why audiences enjoy watching Disney films (Question 8a)

Source: Sample survey responses.

Considering that the target audiences for Disney films are expected to be women and girls (cf. Figure 21), it might be expected that men would therefore be more likely to claim them as a guilty pleasure. However, although only 18%

of all respondents described Disney films as a guilty pleasure, 20% of women chose this option, but just 12% of men said the same. It might be suggested that women understand the 'pop-cultural epithet' (Szalai, 2013) that is 'guilty pleasure' better than men, since cultural pleasures traditionally enjoyed by women such as soaps (Ang, 1989) and reality TV (Weber, 2014) are often looked down upon. In the 'other' category, a popular write-in choice singled out the music in Disney films, as well as the storytelling and humour.

6.3.4.2 Negative Perceptions

The majority of those respondents who do not like Disney films find their portrayals of gender, sexuality, race or disability problematic (Figure 30). The existence of sexism, homophobia, racism and ableism in Disney films is beyond the scope of this research to confirm or deny, however just as the perception that Disney films are all animated is factually incorrect, yet based in some truth, it is likely that the same applies with perceptions concerning matters of representation. Further discussion of Disney's perceived problems of representation are expanded on in section 6.5.1.

Over half of respondents were also not impressed by Disney's commercialism, while others indicated that Disney films are not worth their time since they are discerning adults with more age-appropriate viewing choices available. This view reiterates the perception that Disney films are for children, and are somehow less worthy forms of entertainment, delivering (middle brow?) pleasures that are too simple for mature adults to enjoy. Perceptions of over-commercialism could refer to Disney's prolific merchandising efforts, which are generally drawn from animated features, although respondents without children were slightly more likely to say that Disney is overly commercial compared to those with children (57% vs 54% respectively).
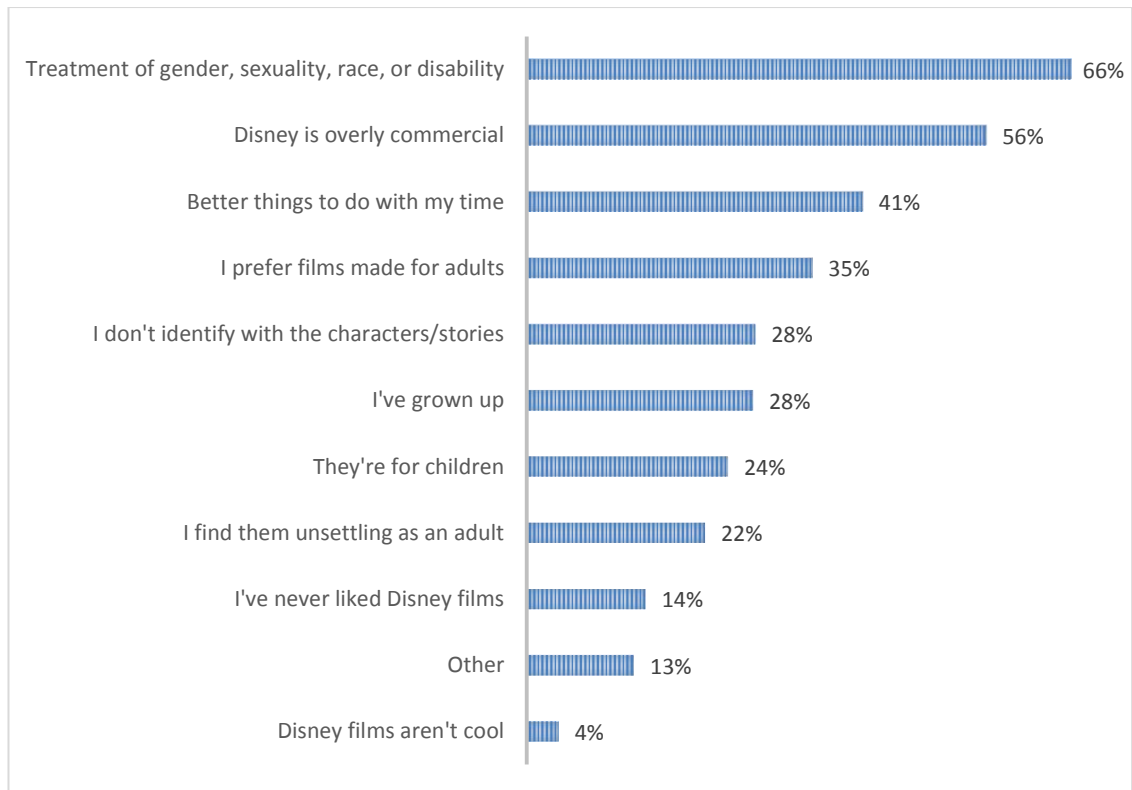
Figure 30: Why audiences don't enjoy watching Disney films (Question 8b)

Source: Sample survey responses.

Demographic splits occurred in several of the responses, for example 76% who identified as LGBT+ found fault with Disney films' treatment of gender, sexuality, race or disability, compared with 61% of heterosexual respondents. Similarly, 69% of women had problems with Disney's representation compared to 56% of men. These figures suggest that audience members are more likely to dislike Disney if they do not see themselves represented in Disney films.

Respondents aged 18-24 were much more likely than older age groups to say that they had grown up and that Disney films were for children. This may be because those aged 18-24 want to reaffirm their maturity so soon after childhood. However, these figures are only based on a small dataset of 90 respondents aged 18-24 who do not like Disney films, just 4% of the overall respondents for this age group, so conclusions are less robust. Several minor themes that came up in the 'other' category for Question 8b included reference to Disney films' distortions of original stories and predictable storytelling.

Audiences' reasons for enjoying or not enjoying Disney films seem to indicate that such films are perceived to be most relevant for childhood viewing, either when enjoyed through the lens of nostalgia or left firmly in the past with other childhood pursuits. There are also strong indications from both positive and negative perceptions of Disney films that the films in question are likely to be animated, and this perception likely helps to frame the films as being for children, following the equation *cartoons = kids*. And while such films may be praised for high quality production and animation, the stories that Disney represents on screen are considered (too) safe and (too) easy to watch for some adult audiences, as well as potentially problematic in terms of the conservative values that they are perceived to promote.

6.4 Enjoying Disney Films

Discussion in the previous section involved interpretation of quantitative data drawn from the sample survey of 3,524 responses and thus provided an overview of the breadth of perceptions and feelings about Disney films. In sections 6.4 and 6.5 I turn to the qualitative data that has been drawn from my sample survey and focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of adult perceptions of Disney films, and to interrogate the conclusions drawn from the quantitative data already presented.

Section 6.4 begins by addressing the most common reasons given by respondents who enjoy Disney films, while section 6.5 considers why other respondents do not enjoy Disney films. Section 6.6 draws the chapter to a conclusion about the nature of the Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG) as perceived by adult audiences based on the quantitative and qualitative data that has been collected and analysed.

The qualitative data drawn from the sample survey includes answers to Question 9, which asked: 'how has your experience of Disney films changed since you were a child?' 20% of respondents reported that they enjoyed Disney films more as an adult, and 24% said that they enjoyed them less, while 54% reported that their feelings had not changed (and 3% said that they did not watch Disney films as an adult). The 700 and 831 respondents who said that

they enjoyed Disney films more and less respectively, were then asked to elaborate and provide their own reasons for this greater or lesser enjoyment, in Questions 9a and 9b. Table 12 shows the different categories of positive responses drawn from Question 9a.

Reasons for Enjoying Disney Films	Number of Responses
Understand/appreciate (hidden) jokes/references/storylines	378
Appreciation of artistic merits / production history	123
Nostalgia / Familiarity	67
Share experience with (grand)children	48
Quality of Disney films has improved / remains constant	43
Accessibility / Didn't watch them as a child	41
Comfort / Enjoyable / Escapism	40
Music / Songs / Singing along	32
Able to relate to characters / themes more	27
They're less problematic / more diverse now	16
Pixar	16
Simplicity / Innocence / Safe	15
Enjoying critiquing them	13
More complex stories / themes in newer films	12
Enjoy Disney in different ways / Disney has changed	10
Star Wars is now part of Disney	9
Professional reasons	9
Marvel is now part of Disney	8
Stopped caring what others thought	7
Social experience	7
Enjoy films in general more as an adult	5
Disney films are better than any others	4
No longer scared by Disney films	3
I don't know	1

Table 12: Reasons for enjoying Disney films more as an adult (Question 9a)

Source: Sample survey responses (Qualitative responses grouped by category and coded by author).

In Question 24, respondents were given the opportunity to write anything they wanted about their experiences of Disney films as adults, and these responses were coded and split into broad categories. Out of 965 substantive

responses, 61% included positive remarks about Disney films, 21% had negative content, and 57% of comments were neutral[123].

The responses to Question 9a, positive responses from Question 24, and subsequent discussions conducting through focus groups have enabled me to draw out three broad themes relating to reasons for adult enjoyment of Disney films. These three themes are presented below.

6.4.1 Hidden Jokes

> While the stories are understandable and enjoyable as a child, often more complex underlying meanings come through when watching them as an adult, such as more adult jokes. While these jokes, for example, do not make the film any less meaningful or fun for children, when watching as an adult, you find things that you maybe missed or didn't appreciate at a younger age. (F, 25-34, British)

Of the 700 respondents who provided an answer to Question 9a (why do you enjoy watching Disney films more as an adult?), over half referred to an appreciation of the jokes, references or general content in Disney films that they had not understood or been aware of as children. These so-called 'hidden jokes' involved wordplay and references that the respondents now had the cultural experience, education and maturity to appreciate and understand. For many adult viewers, Disney films become suddenly more complex and layered, in ways that more mature audiences can appreciate.

An example of a 'hidden' joke can be found in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996c) when Phoebus calls his horse to his side with the command: 'Achilles, heel!' A minor moment, but one which would fly over the heads of all but the most precocious young viewers. Such wordplay, references or visual gags are littered throughout animated Disney films, particularly the more self-

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[123] Some responses to Question 24 included several comments that could be described as negative and/or positive and/or neutral. 11% of substantive responses were categorised as 'miscellaneous' or not relating to Disney films, such as supportive messages for the researcher, criticism of the questionnaire, or the three people who seemed to think that I was a part of Disney and thus responsible for Disney's decision making. 73% of the 3,524 total respondents provided no substantive response to Question 24.

reflective and self-conscious films released since the 1989 Disney Renaissance.

Disney films are written, produced and directed by adult filmmakers so it stands to reason that they might contain cultural references that those adults might find amusing or resonant, even if the primary audience for such film is supposedly children. Disney has always been in the business of trying to reach a wide range of audiences with its films, although even Walt Disney once said that: 'I aim my work for adults. It's a success only if they like it. Sure, the children are important but their parents pay for the tickets' (quoted in Korkis, 2016, p.84). The importance of keeping parents and guardians interested while they accompany their children to the latest animated film has not lessened today, but as established in Question 7, 64% of respondents have seen Disney films at the cinema without children anyway.

It is perhaps even more important to have the ticket-buying adults on side today, as Disney films are not the only family films or animations on offer. While Disney had a virtual monopoly on animation for many decades, since the advent of CGI animation in the 1990s, animated Disney films now must compete in a crowded marketplace with releases from Blue Sky Studios, Illumination Entertainment, and DreamWorks Animation, among others. Many examples of modern animation films fail to satisfy adult audiences, as reflected in critical reviews that relegate the likes of *Postman Pat: The Movie* (2014m) to being only fit for children. If animated films do not pass muster with adult critics, they are less likely to find mainstream success, and here Disney has an advantage in the perception of audiences who consider that Disney films feature hidden jokes and are generally well made.

The 'hidden' jokes cited by respondents as reasons for enjoying Disney films have always been present in the films and could be described as hiding in plain sight. Many respondents explained that their appreciation of hidden jokes also extended to understanding more about character motivations, catching references to other Disney films, and spotting allusions to other cultural texts, such as the echoes of Shakespeare's Hamlet in the plot of *The Lion King* (1994b).

> Understanding the extra layer of jokes and content added for mature viewers. The depth of the stories. (F, 25-34, British)

> There are a lot of great jokes for adults that go right over kid's heads. I enjoy finding what I missed when I was young and I also enjoy that my kids don't understand yet. :) (F, 25-34, American)

Aside from the laughter elicited by freshly understood jokes, the adult audience member who spots the inter-textual references or the innuendoes can also take pride in the discovery, realising that they are in on a joke that their children do not understand, or that they themselves did not appreciate as a child. Perhaps there is also pleasure to be found in realising how much an adult audience member has matured emotionally and intellectually since childhood, offering a slightly different, albeit connected, pleasure to nostalgia for lost childhood pursuits. As one respondent explained, Disney films are:

> Magical, often with a secret language you'd only get once you reach your 18th Birthday (F, 25-34, British)

Suddenly turning 18 does not of course magically awaken audiences to an understanding of the nuances and hidden jokes of Disney films, but rather education and experience does. There may be plenty of jokes within a Disney film that remain hidden to many adults who do not have the cultural experiences or knowledge to unlock them, particularly if the jokes or references are specific to a particular geographic culture. A joke that works in the USA may not translate (unless literally translated by international dubbing) in Japan, for example. To counter such culturally specific references, a number of Disney films, mainly from Pixar, have adapted for local audiences. In the US version of *Inside Out* (2015g), for example, a character daydreams about hockey, but in several international versions the sport is changed to soccer. Making these changes is easier in animation, when a dub or new animation can create local resonance more easily than in a live-action film.

One respondent made it clear that the hidden content that brings her pleasure is confined to animated films:

> Rewatching Disney films (by which [I] mostly mean cartoons)
> makes me realise that there is nuance in them which is for
> adults and that I did not grasp as a child. (F, 25-34, Italian)

The BuzzFeed and Tumblr lists that point out in-jokes and self-referencing in Disney films and are shared in their thousands on social media are exclusively devoted to animated films, and generally confined to animated Classics. As usual, live-action Disney films and non-Classics are overlooked. The preference that adult audiences express for hidden jokes and references therefore emphasises the importance of animation to the perception of Disney films.

The need to justify taking pleasure in an animated feature (or cartoon, a term that I find more appropriate to describe theatrical shorts) may also be what leads 5.2% of respondents to describe enjoying Disney films as a guilty pleasure. I was surprised that more respondents did not define their interest in Disney films as a guilty pleasure, and even more surprised that only one respondent referred directly to the concept of Disney films as a guilty pleasure in their written comments – in order to dismiss the idea:

> Watching Disney films are just a pleasure, not a guilty pleasure
> :) (F, 18-24, British)

While it is unexpected that respondents do not generally think of Disney films as guilty pleasures, I would suggest that repeated references to the importance of hidden jokes as part of the pleasurable Disney film experience come freighted with implicit judgement. There is an implication that adult audiences are generally uncomfortable to admit taking pleasure from something as simple as the animation, songs or characters present in Disney films. Thus, audiences have to find more intellectual and more adult-appropriate features within Disney films on which to hang their pleasure, and the identification of 'hidden jokes' fulfils this brief. It would be interesting to question audiences further about whether they find hidden jokes in live-action Disney films.

Slightly different to the existence of hidden jokes are the supposedly hidden depths of Disney films:

> I find there are hidden depths and messages to Disney movies
> that are often missed by those who dismiss them. (F, 25-34,
> American)

This respondent acknowledges that Disney films are too readily dismissed by those who find them childish or in some way unacceptable adult viewing, and she also suggests that the appeal of Disney films requires a committed interest, that their real pleasures and depths cannot be appreciated unless the viewer pays attention. Being part of the crowd shrewd enough to discover and appreciate the depths and humour contained within Disney films therefore offers pleasures that cannot be found by those who just dismiss them out of hand.

6.4.2 Quality and Artistry

The next most common source of enjoyment for adult audiences of Disney films concerns the quality of their production and, in particular, the artistry on display in animated films, as noted by the following respondent:

> [T]he level of work and the depth of process in the animated films particularly is a way for me to engage with and enjoy the films – no one does process and implementation like Disney (F, 45+, American)

Referring to 'process and implementation' is a rather dry compliment, showing no emotional engagement with Disney films but admitting to an appreciation of their technical prowess. Admiring the production values of Disney films might be considered an acceptable reason for adults to excuse themselves for enjoying children's cartoons.

The 100+ respondents who commented on the quality and artistry of Disney films once again implies that their perception of Disney films relates to animation rather than Disney's live-action output. Many of the comments about the craft of animation and filmmaking come from artists or animators themselves, and a large proportion of respondents who appreciate Disney's artistic merits are male. For several respondents, it is only their admirable production quality that makes Disney films, begrudgingly, acceptable:

> I recently completed my university degree in animation, and because of that, I have developed [a] clear understanding of the amount of time and effort it takes to create a single Disney film, and I have a newfound respect for Disney because of it. (M, 18-24, British)

> I have better appreciation for the craft of animation, which
> improves the experience even for the movies I did not enjoy as
> a child. (M, 25-34, British)

In a similar way that enjoyment of animated Disney films can be acceptable when couched in terms of the craft of animation, the films of Pixar Animation Studios seem to represent the acceptable face of animation for the discerning adult film fan. Pixar films are commonly held to a higher standard than films from Disney's other studios, with over 50 respondents making particularly positive references to Pixar in their comments:

> Greater appreciation for the craft, also think specific films
> (especially Pixar) are made with adults in mind.
> (M, 25-34, British)

> They usually have nuance that goes over kid's heads but that I
> now catch as an adult, especially the Disney Pixar films.
> (M, 25-34, American)

One respondent even credits Pixar with bringing filmmaking kudos to Disney, which it had apparently lacked before (although they do not identify any of the 'great' new films):

> Since they bought Pixar they have started producing actually
> great films, instead of churning out obvious predictable stories.
> (M, 35-44, British)

Pixar's status as the animation studio that it is okay to be seen enjoying is particularly pertinent among male audience members, perhaps because Pixar is not associated with the princesses, romance and musicals that audiences perceive of as typical Disney animation. Instead, Pixar tends to produce male-dominated buddy movies – only two of the 16 Pixar films in the census feature female leads (*Brave* (2012d) and *Inside Out* (2015g), both produced while Pixar was under Disney ownership), a poor record for a studio that was lauded by respondents for being more progressive and less conservative than Disney generally.

Many respondents enjoy Disney films because they expect them to be well made, and Walt Disney's pushing of technological and artistic boundaries continues to be pushed in the modern day. Disney films represent a solid,

reliable source of entertainment, which is an important consideration in a crowded film marketplace with high ticket prices. Many respondents even lauded Disney for the way that they are improving representation and adapting to the less conservative outlook of the TDG 2.0, thus improving the quality of Disney films overall.

6.4.3 Comfort and Nostalgia

> The comfort and convenience of these [Disney] videos was
> overpowering. (Suskind, 2014, p.22)

As Ron Suskind recognises, Disney films can provide a source of comfort in a variety of ways for audiences, and the concept of nostalgia is closely linked with such comforts, especially for those who grew up watching the films as children (16% did not, according to Question 6). Respondents talked not just about nostalgia for watching Disney films, but for the feeling of being a child again, and for watching as part of a family:

> Sense of comfort - of being a child and getting lost in the film
> away from stresses and strains of adult life (F, 45+, British)

> Nostalgia. Also love the songs in the classic ones. And good for
> weepy period moments! (F, 25-34, British)

> Nostalgia of when I used to watch and catching all the little
> things I missed as a kid. I also love seeing the way my kids
> react to my faves and new movies as well. (F, 25-34, American)

The importance of the shared experience of Disney was echoed by several participants. Disney films have the ability to act as a sort of common cultural currency (a cross between the theme parks' 'Disney Dollars' and the Euro perhaps), bridging gaps between geographies and generations. Thus adults are able to share their memories of watching Disney films, as well as the films themselves, with their children and grandchildren, as the following respondents illustrate:

> I love sharing the films I loved as a child with my own children
> as well as enjoying the new films with them. The first film I ever

took my son to cinema to see was *Wreck it Ralph* the 2nd was *Planes*. (F, 25-34, British)

I am probably more excited to share Disney with my grandchildren than I was with my children--more time and money now. (F, 45+, American)

The cultural currency of Disney films also works across international borders, since 'Disney's success means everyone, worldwide, has watched these films [they are] a great equaliser' (Suskind, 2014, p.250) as recognised by this Japanese respondent:

I feel nostalgia when I watch the Disney movie, and the movie is usually well known over the world. It is good start to make the communication with international friend. (F, 25-34, Japanese)

Disney's animated films are particularly useful for inter-generational and inter-cultural communication as they have been regularly re-released to cinemas, TV and home media, and also often have a timeless, placeless quality that makes them accessible to all. Animated Disney films are also easily adapted for international audiences through dubbing into local languages, which can also be useful for learning languages:

I watch Disney films in the foreign language I'm learning because I'm familiar with the stories and the vocabulary is not complicated, but also not childish (F, 18-24, Canadian)

Music is an important part of Disney films' cultural currency since the songs of the animated Classics in particular have become important reference points – whether or not audiences have seen *Snow White* it is likely they would be familiar with 'Whistle While You Work' and 'Heigh-Ho'. Music and songs are therefore important to many audience members as a source of comfort and familiarity, and foster feelings of happiness, nostalgia and social connection:

My friends are all really into Disney so they're great talking points, and obviously being able to sing all the songs together is a really fun experience that you don't get so much as a kid. (F, 18-24, British)

Also if you grow up with them it becomes a part of your culture. E.g. who can't sing along with the beginning of *Lion King*?? (F, 18-24, British)

One of the important features about Disney songs is that they are catchy, with a deceptive simplicity that renders them memorable to children and adults alike. Of course, it takes skilled composers to make a song seem so effortless, just as it takes skilled craftspeople to produce a film that appears simple enough for children to follow but is accessible to all ages. Respondents often reacted to this seeming simplicity of Disney films, as well as a perceived innocence – qualities valued by audiences seeking respite from the violence and hyper-sexualisation of other Hollywood films, or desiring escape from real world worries. The following respondents point to Disney films' use as a balm for world-weary adults:

> In a world full or depression and hate it's a form of escapism. They're fun easy and can normally sing along which makes me happy (F, 25-34, British)

> I used them as a cheer up/anti-depressant which [I] suspect is a subconscious link to happier childhood memories. (F, 35-44, British)

Disney films are also perceived to be safe choices for parents who want films to watch with their children that can be enjoyed by both generations. The social bond that Disney films are able to foster between family members can last long after the children are grown too, as one mother observed:

> Myself and all my family love everything about Disney, so much so that my daughters 30th birthday is going to be Disney fancy dress! (F, 45+, English)

As will be shown in section 6.5, not all parents are happy for their children to watch Disney films, particularly because of perceived problems concerning gender, race or sexuality. However, other respondents report that they take comfort and draw strength from Disney films regarding these very subjects. A quote from one respondent attests to the power of Disney on his sexuality in no uncertain terms:

> Frozen is an iconic gay extravaganza and Elsa helped me come out. YAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAS QWEEEEEEEN (M, 18-24, Bulgarian)

While some respondents decry the exclusively heterosexual characters that populate Disney films, others do not need them to identify with the characters, and make their own queer readings:

> It is nostalgic and has a special place in my heart because they were the first movies that I latched onto and saw myself in as a gay man, I related to the princesses. (M, 25-34, American)

Similarly, while there are those who criticise the perceived overabundance of orphaned characters and on-screen deaths of mothers and fathers in animated Disney films – Bambi's mother and Mufasa in *The Lion King* (1994b) being infamous examples[124] – such films are also able to offer comfort to people who have suffered loss:

> I think as an adult, Disney films can be a great stress reliever, and have personally helped me through highly emotional issues such as coping with death. (F, 25-34, British)

The perceived simplicity and safety of a Disney film can help an audience member to escape at a time of emotional distress, but can also help them to process their feelings of grief, confusion or trauma. Watching how a Disney character experiences the pain of losing a parent may provide strength and inspiration to both children and adults who find themselves in the same situation. The example of Owen Suskind, discussed in Chapter 1, illustrates how Disney films can provide the tools for children and adults with autism to understand the world and communicate by studying how the animated characters in Disney films interact. Their exaggerated actions and emotions have enabled Owen and others with autism to process emotions in a way that the disorder would not otherwise permit (see Suskind, 2014).

The position of those who accuse Disney films of problematic portrayals of women will be discussed in section 6.5.1, but it should be noted that not all audience members subscribe to the idea that the heroines in Disney films are

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[124] The death of Bambi's mother has become so well known that it has become a cliché, but it is also commonly misremembered for the character dies *off*-screen, perhaps making the act even more upsetting as it must be imagined. It should also be noted that of 54 animated Classics, around 18 feature protagonists who are orphaned or are part of single parent families, but only 5 films actually portray the deaths (on or off-screen) of family members: *Bambi*, *The Lion King*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Brother Bear*, and *Big Hero 6*.

'helpless, brainless, passive, and superficial' (Fine, 2016, p.28). Indeed, it is possible for female audience members to find empowerment in the portrayals of women in Disney films:

> Love Disney grown up with it and actually think women often
> end up the heroines without people seeing it –
> [Mulan] saves China
> [Pocahontas] saves John smith
> Meg saves Hercules
> *Frozen* well that's clear
> More than anything in it all its a women's love that frees the
> men from confines of their existence.
> I say this as people often say Disney does not represent
> women well and in body image terms no but in terms of
> women's strength yes it does if you get it! (F, 25-34, British)

This respondent acknowledges the problems with body image in animated Disney films, but also demonstrates that there is no single universal reading of a (Disney) film. When she qualifies her remarks with 'if you get it', she makes clear that there has to be a willingness on the part of the audience to look past prevailing perceptions about a film or genre to find their own interpretation. The comment also speaks to the ways in which this respondent feels she must stand up for her enjoyment of Disney films in the face of convention.

Aside from contentious matters of representation in Disney films, they also offer simpler comforts that are easier to identify. Familiarity combined with a perception of light-heartedness and simplicity means that Disney films are often turned to in times of illness, particularly self-inflicted illness:

> Perfect to watch on a Saturday afternoon if you have a
> hangover! (M, 45+, British)

It is unlikely that such hangover sufferers opt to watch Disney's nature documentaries or noisy live-action science fiction or Marvel films. It is more likely that they are seeking solace in familiar animated fare that will not tax the alcohol-dulled brain and body, perhaps reminding them of a time in their childhood before drinking entered their lives and made it more complicated.

For some respondents, Disney films only represent part of the whole Disney Company output, and as such they acknowledge that the theme parks, particularly, are just as (if not more) important to their enjoyment of Disney:

> It's not just about Disney films, it's about the Disney experience. Especially going to the Disney parks, [it's] pure escapism where you can be a child again and just see the magic and wonder of Disney. It's [being] part of a culture no matter race or anything like that. Disney is all accepting. (F, 25-34, British)

For this respondent, the entire concept of Disney represents escapism, with the films just being one means of escape. I would agree with this assessment – Disney films are just one branch of Disney's entertainment empire – but from this branch grows the characters and imagery that populate the theme parks and Disney Store shelves.

The comments discussed and analysed in this section have illustrated how important the perception of comfort offered by Disney films is to the FDG. These comforts encompass: the nostalgia of reliving childhood experiences; a cultural currency that fosters social interaction across generational and international boundaries; and a source of empowerment and protection from the reality of adult life. Importantly, this comfort is intrinsically linked to an equivalence of Disney films with animation, a perception that runs through most respondents' comments, whether directly or implicitly. This perception also runs through the themes of hidden jokes, quality and artistry, as well as comfort, confirming animation's centrality to the FDG.

6.4.4 Other Reasons for Enjoying Disney Films

There were several other reasons given by respondents for enjoying Disney films as adults that do not fit into the three broad themes discussed above but warrant mention. These include the fact that some adults have a greater appreciation of film as a medium than they did as children, or have a professional interest in Disney film, through filmmaking, animation and academia. One important factor in the enjoyment of Disney films that should not be underestimated is improved access to the films:

> I have more access to them. Growing up we would rent videos
> for a treat but rarely bought them or went to the cinema. Now I
> have much more opportunity to watch them. (F, 25-34, British)

> I have [greater] access to them, so [I] have [seen] more
> different ones, which has made me [appreciate] them more (F,
> 18-24, Danish)

Having Disney films be more accessible means that it is also easier to access the pleasures that the films embody. Access might mean that adults with disposable income can afford to access Disney films that their parents could or would not provide, or it might mean that the way films are available on home media or digitally makes them more accessible to modern audiences. Greater access to Disney films also makes critiquing or studying them for professional reasons much easier (Parker and Parker, 2011).

Sometimes Disney films are more accessible to adult audiences because they were not allowed to watch them by parents worried about the messages that they thought Disney films contained:

> I wasn't allowed by my parents to watch much Disney (except
> Mary Poppins) as a small child as they think they are poor
> representation of the stories but I watched at boarding senior
> school and now enjoy as a shared watching experience and the
> music as fun sing along songs. (F, 25-34, British)

As the respondent above notes, banning Disney from her childhood did not affect her ability to enjoy Disney later in life when the films were used to bond with her peers. Banning anything from a child's life risks turning it into a taboo that the child and subsequent adult gravitates towards, in defiance of parental control. Instead of banning Disney films, other parents use them as tools for introducing their children to potentially complicated issues, such as representation and relationships with media more generally, as the following respondent attests:

> I enjoy watching the older, classic Disney films with my family,
> using a critical [lens]. These films, such as the titles *Cinderella*,
> *Snow White*, and *Pinocchio*, are full of gender stereotypes,
> sexism, and racism. I feel it important to discuss these topics
> with my children and help them start to question media from a
> young age. These early Disney films are a great platform for

such discussions since they are high-interest and culturally significant. (F, 35-44, American)

As well as the influence of parents and children on a person's responses to Disney films, the changes introduced by Disney's filmmakers also have an effect on how much audiences enjoy the films. Respondents report improvements in the quality of the films and in the representation of women and minorities as reasons for enjoying Disney films more as adults:

> I think they have improved over the last 30 years - I have thoroughly enjoyed the way they have become more feminist. The music is lovely and the jokes for grown-ups are better than the ones for kids! (F, 25-34, British)

Pixar has already been mentioned as an important reason for some audience members' enjoyment of Disney films, but the acquisitions of Marvel and Star Wars were also referenced. The alternative reactions of Star Wars fans to Lucasfilm's acquisition by Disney is captured in the title of William Proctor's article: 'Holy crap, more *Star Wars*! *More Star Wars*? What if they're crap?': Disney, Lucasfilm and *Star Wars* online fandom in the 21st century' (2013, italics in original). Most of the comments made in my survey about Disney's takeover of Star Wars from George Lucas were positive, offering a new hope for those Star Wars fans still smarting from memories of the poorly received prequel trilogy (1999-2005):

> I'm very much a fan of Star Wars though, and with how good [*The Force Awakens*] was I have high hopes that Disney will be able to instill some of its magic back into live-action, sci-fi stuff. (F, 18-24, Brazilian)

Similarly, there was mostly positive feeling about Disney's acquisition of Marvel and their ongoing superhero film franchise, although with some reservations:

> I'm really glad Disney bought Marvel, because now there is a whole ton of money being pumped into a franchise I love, I just wish they would realise that their core audience is not just teen boys to balance out the [Disney] princess brand, and include female superheros and fans in the franchise. (F, 25-34, British)

While some respondents bemoaned the abundance of comic book films in cinemas, others appreciated the fact that Disney has the resources and synergy experience to expand these beloved worlds across film and beyond. Disney certainly has a better reputation and track record for comic book movies than rival studios such as Warner Bros. or Sony, who have seen several comic book adaptations mauled by critics and box office in recent years.

Finally, several respondents reported that growing up has allowed them to shrug off worries about appearing cool or caring about what others think about their interest in Disney and have chosen to embrace these films. Such responses illustrate an awareness that Disney films are not considered to be a socially acceptable choice for young people trying to be taken seriously as mature individuals, as this self-aware respondent notes:

> Because I can allow myself to enjoy them now, whereas when I was a teenager I couldn't like anything, especially Disney. (F, 35-44, American)

And occasionally respondents have decided to grudgingly give in to their enjoyment, even if they would prefer not to, as this respondent notes:

> [I]'ve learned to give up any dignity or self-respect [I] had as a child and gorge myself on melodramatic shlock […] they're fucking embarrassing, shameful schlock, [I] really like them a lot though (M, 18-24, American)

These additional reasons for enjoying Disney films do not necessarily conflate them with animation, and acknowledge the wider reach and changes to the concept of Disney film in recent years across Marvel, Lucasfilm, and theme parks. They also relate to barriers to enjoyment of Disney films that have been overcome – such as accessibility, parental censorship and teenage fears of being thought 'uncool'. These barriers may be due to a perception that Disney films are unsuitable for children (because of poor treatment of women and minorities) or that they are only for children (and therefore not cool for teenagers). Parental perceptions and peer pressure consequently illustrate the contradictory aspects of the Fantasy Disney Genre, negative elements of which are discussed in the next section.

6.5 Not Enjoying Disney Films

As noted in the introduction to section 6.4, the qualitative data used to discuss the reasons why adult audiences do or do not enjoy Disney films has been drawn from answers to Questions 9 and 24, along with discussions from focus groups. In this section I use qualitative data from Question 9b (illustrated in Table 13) and negative responses from Question 24, plus commentary from focus groups, to consider the reasons why adult audiences do not enjoy watching Disney films.

Reasons for Not Enjoying Disney Films	Number of Responses
Issues with race, gender, class, representation	283
Grown up / Appreciate in different way / Understand them better	215
Films are boring/predictable/simplistic/not complex enough	177
Other interests / More selective / Less time	72
Commercialism & Merchandising	41
Films aren't as good as they were	40
Films are sentimental / childish	25
Do enjoy *some* Disney films	23
Don't like animation / CGI animation	21
Disney messes with classic stories	14
Made for children	13
Music / Singing is irritating	12
Miscellaneous	10
No reason	9
They're traumatic for children	6
Hate Disney	6
Films too easily available	4
Evil Walt Disney	3

Table 13: Reasons for enjoying Disney films less as an adult (Question 9b)

Source: Sample survey responses (Qualitative responses grouped by category).

6.5.1 Problems with Representation

The number one most popular concern of those who do not enjoy Disney films was issues with representation, whether that be in regards to race, gender, sexuality, disability, body image, or all of the above. 34% of those who said that they enjoy Disney films less as an adult cited problems with representation in

their written comments. Disney's problematic relationship with representation was acknowledged and discussed in section 5.5, but for many respondents these ideological hurdles taint all Disney films. Thus it is impossible for some respondents to take any general pleasure in Disney films, although some do find exceptions.

The following respondent is clearly no fan of Disney animation, but acknowledges an interest in (Marvel) superhero films, pointing out their use as a familial bonding exercise in much the same way as other respondents talk of animated Disney films:

> When my kids were small I welcomed the fact that The Little Mermaid and any films featuring dogs kept my daughter quiet. I did feel guilty though (but she's a rabid feminist now so obviously Disney tosh didn't socialise her inappropriately). Disney animation makes me want to stick my fingers down my throat and my head in an oven simultaneously - but I do like superhero movies - going for a pub meal and then to the cinema to see a superhero movie is a bit of a family tradition: it's how we end every holiday and celebrate my eldest son's birthday. Personally I like Thor movies best (the women finally get a bit of eye candy). (F, 45+, British)

Despite dismissing Disney films, this respondent also reluctantly and parenthetically admits that, although exposed to Disney animation as a child, her daughter has not been adversely affected by the Disney films that acted as her babysitters. This respondent also has no problems with sexually objectifying men in the superhero films that she enjoys.

The perception that *all* Disney films are unrepresentative of modern liberal attitudes appears to be based on either hearsay or acquaintance with a handful of (admittedly potentially problematic) animated films and thus does not accurately reflect the Disney film canon. As with many stereotypes and clichés, this perception does have some basis in truth, as discussed in Chapter 5, and some respondents provide examples to support their positions. However, many respondents state as fact that Disney films are somehow bad for children, but do not provide evidence for such claims.

Feeling that Disney films are harmful to children, some parents ban them from their child's viewing but, as noted in section 6.4.4, such censorship has the potential to make Disney films more attractive. A Disney ban may also be counterproductive if it leads to children feeling excluded, unable to trade in the cultural currency of Disney films that fosters communication across generational and national boundaries (see section 6.4.3). Parental attitudes to Disney films that perceive them to be corrupting and offensive may then be passed on to their children, and thus the negative perceptions are perpetuated.

That is not to suggest that these parental fears are completely unfounded. It is unlikely that a lack of LGBT+ representation would be at the top of concerns for most (heterosexual) parents, but it does not pass unnoticed. According to the annual GLAAD Studio Responsibility Index, which monitors the inclusion of LGBT+ representation in Hollywood films, 'Walt Disney Studios has the weakest historical record when it comes to LGBTQ-inclusive films of all the major studios' (GLAAD, 2017). This lack of representation was identified by several respondents:

> The classic films are so heteronormative and sexist that it makes my skin crawl. (F, 35-44, American)

> Overdetermined emphasis on heteronormativity, the American Dream, and idealized notions of family (F, 45+, Canadian)

A lack of positive LGBT+ representation is not unusual in Hollywood filmmaking, and according to GLAAD's report, in 2016 any filmic LGBT+ representation from the big studios was homophobic or generally negative in tone. Social media has given those who feel unrepresented a means of responding to filmmakers directly about outdated or non-existent representation, and Disney has begun to address these issues, although the offending films (*Song of the South* (1946b) aside) remain in circulation.

Another cause for concern among respondents is the over-abundance of white characters and actors in Disney films. This can pose a particular problem for parents, as the following respondents illustrate:

> My daughter is biracial, and [wants] to be a princess, which to her means blonde hair and white skin, so the racial issue is also a problem. (F, 35-44, American)

> I can now see behind the character portrayals some racist attitudes of the time e.g. the circus workers in *Dumbo*, the use of black African speech for some characters in *The Jungle Book* and the predominately white Caucasian world of the Classic Disney Stories is also noted. I am not so sure about recent animations. My daughter is mixed race and loves watching *Dumbo*, so I believe these layers are easily missed as a child. However, it worries me they will seep into her unconscious mind. It could also be said that it is to be viewed more of a historical mirror of that time, but the awareness needs to be there. (F, 45+, British)

It is clear that the perception of Disney films that these respondents draw upon is preoccupied with animation (not to mention media effects). While Disney has made strides with non-white animated princesses – including *Pocahontas* (1995f), Tiana in *The Princess and the Frog* (2009e), and most recently *Moana* (2016h) – Disney films have yet to feature an animated bi-racial lead to satisfy these respondents, but then no one film could satisfactorily represent every audience member's demographic traits.

The accepted position of many female respondents is to attack Disney for its princesses' lack of agency, unrealistic body images, and heteronormative relationship goals, as noted by the following respondent:

> I am a mother of two girls and I think their depiction of idealised feminine beauty can be a bit damaging to them. The stories often rely on outdated gender roles which grates on me. (F, 35-44, British)

Concerns about the portrayal of women are a particular concern for mothers, but are not just confined to those with daughters, worried about the effect skinny white princesses might have on their expectations for life and love. There is also worry about the unrealistic expectations such pampered princesses might hold for little boys and the men they will become. It is not just the content of the films that respondents found problematic, but their marketing as well, particularly across Disney's subsidiary studios:

> I'm very dissatisfied with the extremely gender-segregated marketing i.e. Marvel and Star Wars for boys and princesses for girls (F, 25-34, American)

In relation to representation of gender, Disney and Lucasfilm were attacked on social media through the #WheresRey campaign following the lack of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015k) heroine Rey's likeness in Monopoly sets and other merchandise (Tan, 2016). An alternative concern about Disney film merchandising was raised by the following respondent, who finds that although the films may be progressive, their marketing and merchandising is not:

> [Any] inadvertent racism/sexism from old (or even new) Disney films makes me laugh. Interestingly, I enjoy the films but hate the gender-based marketing. I think it's a shame that my son is unsure whether he can publicly 'like' *Frozen*, even though the film itself has a range of characters but the merchandising is predominantly for girly girls. (F, 25-34, British)

While this respondent is able to laugh in the face of Disney films' conservatism, but also dislike the marketing and merchandising, other respondents also display a love/hate relationship with Disney. The following respondent is clear about separating the Disney films they enjoy from those they do not:

> My experience growing up with gender (I am DFAB [designated female at birth]) led me to dislike 'traditional'-style princess films whereas I liked *Mulan*, *Beauty & the Beast*, *Lilo & Stich*. I still like these films and love many of Disney's non-princess films (e.g. *Wreck-It-Ralph*, *Emperor's New Groove*, *Star Wars VII*) but in general I associate Disney with animation and traditional-style princess films, and this puts me off. Similarly I associate Pixar with their almost always male leads and it puts me off. (O, 18-24, Australian)

Although this respondent finds it difficult to identify with traditional Disney heroines, they still are able to enjoy some Disney films, although they admit that their perceptions of what a Disney film is colours their attitudes to even the wider Disney milieu.

So many of the criticisms based on problems with representation lack detail, which leads one to wonder whether the attitudes are based on the respondent's own experiences or simply parroting those opinions expected of responsible liberal audiences (the questionnaire *was* circulated via academic mailing lists). The language used by respondents – 'I now realise', 'I now see' or

'I can see' – implies that adulthood has allowed them to experience an epiphany regarding Disney films that has removed the blinkers of childhood ignorance:

> Because I now realize how these films perpetuate racism, sexism and heteronormative concepts of love and sexuality. (F, 25-34, Austrian)

> Because they have lost their innocence. Now I can see the underlying racism, sexism etc. (F, 25-34, German)

> Awareness of the ideological messages embedded (pro-capitalist, sexist, racist etc.) (M, 25-34, British)

In the same way that many audience members like Disney films for the supposedly hidden humour and references, those who do not like Disney often refer to the hidden racism and sexism, which they can see as adults. There is sometimes an element of pride (and even smugness) in the way that some respondents talk about Disney's problematic elements. Being able to point out the problematic elements in Disney films seems to be as rewarding to those who do not like Disney films as discovering the hidden adult humour is to those who do like them. Such Disney-bashing is a popular sport, particularly since Disney films are such an important part of popular children's culture.

Finally, there are the minority of contrary respondents who believe that Disney is actually *too* progressive and liberal, as this remark indicates:

> I generally trust their old stuff with my kids, but I get nervous about some of the stuff they push out b/c of pressure from homosexual agenda to sexualize characters early. (It's okay to let kids be kids without bringing sex into everything.) (M, 35-44, American)

In explaining why he liked Disney less as an adult, the same correspondent earlier noted that: 'they've become a bit more politicized by pushing gender boundaries, etc.' This respondent was the only one to describe Disney's progressive TDG 2.0 output in a negative light. I find the notion of Disney's so-called homosexual agenda and the sexualisation of characters puzzling, particularly since I and many other LGBT+ identifying men and women have grown up watching exclusively heterosexual couplings in (Disney) films and managed to avoid turning out straight.

6.5.2 Growing Up and Changing Tastes

Many respondents reported that they have grown out of Disney films, either because they have found other interests that they consider more suitable for adult consumption, or because they have had the metaphorical wool lifted from their eyes and become aware of Disney's problems with representation. Occasionally such comments adopt a tone of condescension, implying that those who still persist in liking Disney as adults have failed to grow up as they have. For example, when asked why they enjoy watching Disney films less as adults, some respondents replied:

> Because I'm an adult (M, 25-34, British)
>
> Because I've grown up (M, 35-44, German)
>
> They're aimed primarily at children and it shows. (F, 25-34, American)
>
> Less tolerance for bullshit (45+, American)

These brief responses are implicitly judgemental of both Disney films and their appropriate audiences. They clearly position the respondents as being aware of the audience boundaries of Disney films, and their place outside them.

Other respondents elaborated on the ways that being older and more mature has affected their film tastes and choices using less pejorative language:

> When I was a kid I could get completely lost in the story, no matter how trite/overly simplified it was. I still enjoy them as an adult but through a nostalgic filter. It'll never be the all-encompassing experience it once was. (F, 25-34, American)
>
> As a child, I was obsessed with certain Disney films. As an adult, I still enjoy the films but don't feel the same fervor. (F, 35-44, American)

Both of these respondents qualify their appreciation of Disney, admitting that their interest and enjoyment in Disney films has waned since childhood, presumably as more adult pursuits and worries have monopolised their (leisure) time. Such comments do not necessarily inform the picture of the Fantasy Disney Genre that is being built up, but they imply that children are the more

appreciative audiences of Disney films, as they can devote more time to their enjoyment – although plenty of adult Disney fan/atics would disagree.

As well as claiming that, as adults, they do not have time to enjoy Disney films in the same way, several respondents pointed to adult cynicism as a barrier to their enjoyment:

> I think I've become more cynical as an adult, and I've become more critical. I do appreciate the quality, even though I have issues with certain elements (F, 35-44, American)

> There was just a certain magic that can't be replicated in adulthood. We are more cynical now! (F, 25-34, British)

The claim of cynicism implies that Disney films are something to be cynical about, which suggests that the fantasy that Disney films are perceived to trade in is not acceptable for mature audiences. Cynicism is described as an immovable barrier that would need to be, but cannot be, surmounted to enjoy the pleasures that Disney films have to offer.

Not all adult audience members are cynical though, some just gravitate towards alternative interests, which were not necessarily available to them as children, when their worlds were partly shaped and influenced by parents, schools and other adult authorities:

> Because I have discovered qualitatively better animation films when I grew up. Independent French animation and independent and larger Japanese animation (Ghibli) seems more interesting now (M, 25-34, Dutch)

> My taste in films has grown and broadened so Disney now needs to contend with all film genres whereas as I child I liked Disney alongside other children's films (F, 25-34, British)

Such opinions are not necessarily critical of Disney films per se, although they do suggest that Disney films are particularly popular and prominent in childhood viewing choices compared to other animated films, or more traditionally adult genres, such as horror, documentary or thrillers. The Dutch respondent also draws a distinction between apparently low-brow Disney animation and 'qualitatively better' animated films made by other (independent) producers.

The perception that Disney films are simple was cited as a positive attraction by 19% of respondents who enjoy Disney films, but 35% of those who do not enjoy Disney films cited simplicity as characteristic of Disney films. The suggestion is that Disney films are too simplistic for enquiring adult minds, and that they border on the predictable:

> I prefer more complex stories these days and am less interested in the animated stories than I was as a child. (F, 25-34, British)

> The simplicity is not so appealing as an adult. What felt like a grand, sweeping story when I was a child feels small and less satisfactory when watched again as an adult. (F, 25-34, British)

In contrast to those who value the simplicity and formula of Disney films to escape the complexities of daily life, respondents like those above also crave complexity in their films. Simple stories no longer satisfy the needs of some adult audience members with their greater levels of education and experience, but perhaps a better description of unsatisfactory stories is banal, rather than simple, since Disney films are as narratively complex as any others.

Several more critical responses not only accuse Disney films as being for children, but childish too, or making audiences feel childish for watching them:

> Themes of a childish outcome of a happy ending for all, as well as the cliché and constant portrayal of a prince and a princess falling in love at first sight. (M, 18-24, German)

> Although Disney films are typically well-made, they're produced for families with children. When I watch them on my own I feel childish. This diminishes my enjoyment. (M, 35-44, Canadian)

This German respondent is under the impression that Disney films 'constantly' involve princesses when only around 20 of them do, and also finds happy endings childish and unrealistic. When a Disney film is dismissed as being simple, made for children or for being childish, judgements are being made about children as much as the films. The films that children enjoy are often dismissed and devalued, just as the child viewer is underestimated regarding the pleasures and understanding that they might derive from their film watching experiences.

The very idea that Disney films, which some respondents find childish and upsetting, could be enjoyed by adult audiences is unfathomable to some respondents:

> Frustrated with how obsessive some adults are with Disney. It feels immature to me, and I don't enjoy it. (F, 25-34, American)

Again, a judgement is being made that these films are made for children and therefore not a worthy source of pleasure for adults, especially not when adults take their enjoyment to the level of fandom. Being a fan is devalued, particularly being a fan of children's entertainment. Another respondent described how her adult enjoyment of Disney films has been regarded by her tutors:

> The only difference I have noticed between watching Disney as a child or as an adult, is others perception of what is deemed acceptable. From studying film in University, and particularly studying Disney, I do understand that many adult themes are portrayed in these 'innocent' films and particularly many of concern, however my University lecturers, firstly, believe they are not worthy of study, and secondly, scoff and deem it childish that I, being a film scholar, still love Disney. (F, 18-24, British)

It is particularly troubling that media scholars could be dismissive of Disney films as subjects of study and pleasure when it might be expected that they would be more open minded about the study of different cultural texts. Personally I have not experienced this dismissive attitude towards my academic interest in Disney from other media scholars, but I have seen a few raised eyebrows when mentioning my research topic among a more mixed academic audience.

Walt Disney once observed that 'it is the conventions, the expected staid behaviour of adults, the embarrassment at being thought 'childish', which finally cramps down our imaginative flight and inventive curiosity' (quoted in Korkis, 2016, p.81). Charges of sentimentality, simplicity and childishness all point to the differing perceptions of what is appropriate viewing for adult audiences. Respondents who made differentiations between childhood and adulthood were critical and judgemental of both Disney films as they perceive them, and of those who enjoy them. But other respondents simply reported their tastes in film

had developed and identified the changing nature of their relationship with Disney films as a question of degree, or of shifted values, rather than an outright dislike of all things Disney.

From the shared themes of growing up and changing tastes, it is clear that being particularly suitable for children is a part of the Fantasy Disney Genre perceived by some audiences. It is also clear that many of the respondents and their comments discussed in this section have engaged in a renegotiation of their relationships with Disney films, a practice that will be elaborated on in Chapter 7.

6.5.3 Commercialism

The third most popular refrain from those who do not like Disney films, after representation and growing up, is to do with the commercialism of Disney as a company. Commercialism here refers to Disney's dominant position in the film and entertainment world, as well as the Disney brand, Walt Disney Company (WDC), and various types of merchandising and commercial opportunities.

Responses from those citing issues with commercialism often employed vitriolic tones and language:

> Because I have become aware of the consumerism and aspirationalism [associated] with the films and the brand. […] I dislike Disney as a brand, they represent a global oppression to me. (F, 25-34, British)

> I recognize the over commercialization of them and it disgusts me (M, 25-34, American)

Disgust is a particularly strong reaction to Disney films that are perceived as animated princess films with happy endings, but then these objections do not necessarily relate to Disney films themselves. Such responses relate to the Disney brand more widely, along with merchandising, cross-promotion and publicity campaigns, which particularly irks parents dealing with pester power from their children:

> I suspect this might be off point but the merchandising is my only objection to Disney films, it's just obscene. (F, 35-44, British)

> I have daughters. I think the horrendous merchandising is scandalous. (F, 35-44, British)

The language used – 'horrendous', 'obscene', 'scandalous' – is emotive, demonstrating that Disney films do not exist in a vacuum and that attitudes to the films are informed, for good or ill, by the wider Disney commercial empire. The following respondent feels that Disney's priorities have changed:

> Feel they're less interesting (music not as good etc.) as when I was a kid, and it feels they now focus more on merchandising opportunities than the film itself. (F, 25-34, British)

Ever since Mickey Mouse became a sensation in 1928, Disney has been involved in licencing the likeness of their characters for use on merchandise such as watches, stuffed toys and board games. However, Disney's attitude to merchandising has changed, as animation historian Michael Barrier notes:

> Merchandise licensing and other ancillary sources of revenues were, in Walt Disney's day, a useful cushion against the occasional box-office failure, but such exploitation has come to assume so many forms […] that its revenues can dwarf those of the film itself (2003, p.569)

Several respondents displayed a generally strong dislike of Walt Disney, the WDC and their perceived faults:

> Because Disney sucks, the films are messed up (except for maybe the Lion King), and Walt Disney was a raving anti-Semite (F, 25-34, American)

> I've learned more about Walt Disney and his political ideology, particularly anti-Semitism, which is detestable. (F, 45+, American)

In his article 'Anti-Semitism American-Style and a Man Named Disney' (2016), Douglas Brode acknowledges that 'all across the world, people know only a few things about Walt Disney: that he was a terrible Jew-hater, and that his head […] remains cryogenically frozen' (p.222). Brode uses factual evidence from Walt Disney's life to refute claims of anti-Semitism, but as the handful of

comments from respondents makes clear, this Disney myth continues to circulate and influences audience attitudes towards Disney films, even 50 years after Walt Disney's death.

A variation on the 'Walt Disney as anti-Semite' cliché was shared by the following respondent:

> I am conflicted as Disney was a Nazi sympathiser (F, 45+,
> Welsh)

Once again, evidence for Disney being a Nazi sympathiser is not forthcoming, and considering the work that Walt Disney and his studio carried out during World War II to assist the Allied cause (see Shale, 1982) this claim is puzzling.

Aside from perceptions of Walt Disney, the company's modern business practices also come in for criticism:

> Disney is a corrupt conglomerate of terrorizing business and
> propaganda. They enlist Haitian children to sew the dresses
> and assemble the toys of first world children. They also are a
> vehicle for explicitly political propaganda and soft international
> power. (F, 18-24, American)

These views are reported as accepted facts, and place ethical and moral concerns about the WDC and its founder at the heart of Disney criticism. Such views have no time for individual audience members and their enjoyment, and there is an implication that those who do enjoy Disney are colluding in and perpetuating the evil that these participants feel Disney commits in the world. Again, these criticisms are not based on the films or a perception of the films, but rather a (mis)perception of the wider Disney brand.

6.5.4 Other Reasons for Not Enjoying Disney Films

The damage that Disney does as a brand is also a charge levelled at Disney's ownership of Marvel, Star Wars, and, to a lesser extent, Pixar. Some respondents believed that Disney's ownership of these studios has irreparably ruined the reputation of the subsidiary studios and their subsequent output:

> In general Disney's acquisitions of Pixar and Lucasfilm have
> harmed the quality of those studios' work. Marvel was on

> decline anyways. Disney is at its best when it tried to do things 'classically', e.g. the new Cinderella, or hand-drawn animation. (M, 18-24, American)

Other respondents conversely believed that these brands were responsible for a detrimental impact on Disney itself, drawing the studio away from its original family film or animation remit[125].

Several respondents qualified their responses about Disney films, noting that they do like some but not others. There was some disagreement as to whether audiences considered Disney films of the past better than modern Disney films, or whether modern Disney represented an improvement on the past:

> I became aware of [patriarchal] role-models in the older films, which confused me but didn't disturb me as a child. Some of the new films are better in that aspect (F, 25-34, German)

> Because the Disney films of the past were better (M, 25-34, Greek)

No matter which they thought was best, the fact that audiences distinguish between old/classic and new Disney lends credence to the idea of the Tangible Disney Genre 2.0 that was introduced in Chapter 6. It is not always easy to gauge when old Disney became new Disney, however, as I have heard (in my pilot focus groups, for example) traditional 2D animation as well as films from the Disney Renaissance (which occurred over 50 years after Disney began producing films) described as old Disney.

A small number of respondents said quite clearly that they simply do not like animation, making it very clear that they equate Disney with animation. Others qualified this statement by sharing a dislike of modern CGI animation, preferring traditional 2D animation, thus their enjoyment of Disney has declined as Disney has moved away from the traditional 2D medium.

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[125] In a rare reference to Disney's former indie studio, Miramax, one respondent made his opinion on Disney's subsidiaries quite clear in a vivid semi-haiku:
> Most Marvel movies suck.
> Disney made a mistake of getting rid of Miramax.
> Fuck Harvey Weinstein.
> (M, 18-24, Taiwanese)

A handful of respondents claimed that Disney films are too traumatic for children, and that this affects their own enjoyment of the films (although it is not clear how):

> I feel they often (though not always) paint an unrealistic picture
> of the world. Too many people are raising their children to
> believe [they] ARE princesses, and then reality sets in at some
> point. In the meantime, the child has unrealistic expectations.
> (F, 45+, American)

As discussed in section 6.5.3, children are often underestimated when it comes to their ability to understand Disney films. The respondent above seems to have a bigger issue with parenting techniques than Disney films themselves, but still blames the films for encouraging such behaviour.

A smaller number of respondents find Disney films too readily available, either saturating the cinematic marketplace, particularly since Disney's acquisition of Marvel and Lucasfilm, or no longer having the novelty value of the periodically withdrawn and re-released theatrical and home media releases of earlier decades:

> By owning Pixar, Marvel, lucasfilm – Disney is so pervasive in
> pop culture that [seeing] films is just needed to keep up with
> everyone else - even if they're not great/enjoyable (i.e. Ultron)
> (M, 25-34, American)

Keeping up with Disney film releases can be a tough prospect in a crowded marketplace, particularly when films such as those from Marvel and Lucasfilm are set in a connected universe, potentially turning film-viewing into an exercise in completism rather than pleasure. Similarly the recent run of live-action remakes have an air of obligation about them, as audiences go along to find out what has been done to their beloved animated Classics, rather than because they really want to see another version of *The Jungle Book*.

Just as Disney has been accused of misappropriating its own film legacy with unwelcome remakes, Disney's Americanisation and general bastardisation of popular fairy tales and other well-known stories puts off a number of audience members (even though, as shown in Chapter 5, only around a third of Disney films are based on existing stories):

> I find their tone far too [saccharine] and as I have grown to understand and love the traditional tales many Disney films are based on I find the re-writing to remove conflict and put modern middle-class happy values on these tales inexcusable (M, 35-44, British)

This preference for the original sources is an argument ignorant of the differences between literary fiction and film, as well as devaluing the medium of film in a debate between high and low culture. The argument seems to be that if children grow up only knowing the Disney version of Hans Christian Anderson's *The Little Mermaid* that this is somehow detrimental to them. It may be argued that encountering the Disney version of a story may drive the child to seek out the original. I have acquainted myself with several original stories, including Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* (1993 [1831]), which is a lot bleaker than *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996c), but my enjoyment of one did not preclude my enjoyment of the other. Such arguments about original stories versus adaptations appears to be more about intellectual snobbery than Disney films, and it characterises the films as bastardised adaptations.

To conclude the reasons why adult audiences might not enjoy Disney films as much as they used to, it is worth commenting on the unexpected success (see Wood, 2014) of *Frozen* (2013a) and its infamous songs. For while 32 respondents listed Disney songs as positive reasons for enjoying Disney films, 12 identified them as reasons for not enjoying Disney films. Reasons for not enjoying Disney songs can be summed up by the following two comments from the same respondent:

> Finally, the f***ing songs [sic].

> Apologies for swearing in the earlier box. We've had to watch Frozen a lot. They're quite good to watch up to about three times. Then enough. (F, 35-44, British)

The repetition and popularity of songs such as 'Let It Go' from *Frozen* are a source of irritation for some, and indicate that the pleasures of Disney films (as well as tolerance levels) are much more accessible to younger audiences than some adult audiences.

6.6 Conclusion: Defining the FDG

> Walt Disney Productions was the only Hollywood studio with
> name recognition [in 1977]. It signified a wholesome and –
> equally important – predictable brand of family entertainment.
> People went to see Disney movies for no other reason than that
> they *were* Disney movies. Any film that was not identifiably
> Disney in tone or content might as well be *Deep Throat*
> [(1972b)]; it would destroy the audience's preconception of a
> Disney movie. (Taylor, 1987, p.15)

Forty years on, Disney is still arguably the only Hollywood studio with name recognition among the general population. Such name recognition is combined with a shared perception about what a film bearing this name might be like in a way that cannot be found with Sony or Paramount, for example. As discussed in sections 6.4 and 6.5, the preconceptions that audiences have of Disney films, or the Fantasy Disney Genre, can have both positive and negative connotations.

Although audiences share common perceptions of Disney films – such as their animated nature, simplicity and high production values – other perceptions depend upon whether the audience already possesses a positive or negative attitude towards Disney and Disney films. Therefore just as Chapter 5 established two distinct Tangible Disney Genres, traditional and 2.0, it would appear that there are also two sides to the FDG: the negative FDG (–FDG) and the positive FDG (+FDG).

While both the –FDG and +FDG share common attributes, the ways in which they are understood vary depending on the attitude of the individual audience member. The aspects of the FDG and its positive and negative perspectives are listed in Table 14.

+FDG attitude	FDG Attribute	−FDG attitude
2D or 3D animated fantasies	**Animation**	2D or 3D animated fantasies
Reassuring stories told with successful formula	**Predictable**	Banal, formulaic, unsurprising storytelling
Consistently well-made, artistically advanced	**High Production Values**	Artistic merits have declined or improved
Reflective of times, nostalgia-inducing	**Conservative**	Poor representation of minorities and women
Films part of whole Disney experience	**Commercial**	Films and merchandise saturate marketplace
Catchy songs, singalongs foster bonds	**Musical**	Irritating songs, difficult to avoid
Cultural currency across generations and nations	**Accessible**	Stifles original and independent filmmaking
Hidden jokes/references for adults to discover	**Self-referential**	Unoriginal, reliant on remakes and franchises
All ages can find enjoyment	**Family Friendly**	Children enjoy, adults endure

Table 14: Attributes of the Fantasy Disney Genres

It is possible for an audience member to hold conflicting attitudes towards the positive and negative aspects of the FDG. So for example, it is possible to consider the FDG to be animated and to enjoy Disney films, but at the same time be aware of the conservative values embedded within them. Enjoying Disney films for their comforting, nostalgic traits does not preclude a person from considering Disney films overly commercial or occasionally sexist. As my data has shown, such conflicted responses to Disney films can be quite common, with respondents feeling uneasy about enjoying the films when they also see racist or homophobic elements in them. While parents struggle to renegotiate their relationships with Disney films, they might withhold them from

their children, fearful of the impact that they may have, but this can be a futile endeavour, as one respondent noted:

> I know that they will be captivating but I also find them so problematic so often that it is hard to watch them. Generally I have kept Disney out of the house but it is hard when it is *everywhere*. There have even been YMCA camps my son has gone to that have Disney as their theme of the week. (F, 45+, Canadian)

Perhaps the most pragmatic approach that a concerned parent can take is not simply banning the films but using them as tools to discuss difficult subjects with their children, and ensuring that their experiences move beyond Disney films as the following respondent does:

> As an adult, I see some problematic issues in most Disney films (sexism, [racism]) but I won't prevent my children from watching them, as long as my partner and I make sure they watch/read very diverse stories and get a good education (gender/race equality, etc.) (F, 25-34, French)

However, the present research is not trying to suggest pedagogical uses for Disney films – this comment serves as an indication of the extra level of renegotiation that adults who are parents go through in their relationships with Disney films.

The common perceptions that make up the FDG described in the present research accord with the findings of the Global Disney Audiences Project (GDAP), which noted that 'whether or not respondents liked Disney, they generally agreed on the core values represented in the company's products' (Wasko and Meehan, 2001, p.334). From their audience research, the GDAP researchers concluded that 'respondents agreed not only on the abstract core values but also on the details of narrative structure and character types – that is, on the semiotic structures and functions undergirding multiple Disney animations over the generations' (Wasko and Meehan, 2001, p.334). My own audience research, with its larger dataset (3,500+ vs 1,250+ participants), agrees with this GDAP conclusion as far as it applies to Disney films.

By focusing on the Disney film as a distinct part of the Walt Disney Company (WDC), I have been able to draw out a more nuanced picture of the

shared understandings and perceptions that audiences have about Disney films. The data collected for this research does not prove Wasko and Meehan wrong when they concluded that 'our respondents are strongly disposed to read Disney texts in these terms, regardless of an individual's particular feelings about the company' (2001, p.334). However I suggest that a consideration of positive and negative attitudes is an important aspect of the FDG perception, especially when it comes to adult audiences' renegotiation of their relationships with Disney films. Writing 16 years after the GDAP, I am also able to build on the GDAP conclusion by considering how recent changes in Disney's approach to filmmaking, including its acquisition of new subsidiary studios, has impacted on perceptions of the FDG.

The GDAP conclusion that respondents 'pointed to differences between the traditional Disney and the 'new Disney' [and that the 'new Disney'] is seen as the 'merchandisation of culture' and is rejected' (Wasko and Meehan, 2001, p.335) is challenged in the present research. The difference between traditional or classic Disney and 'new Disney' identified by the GDAP in 2001 is slight compared to the changes that have occurred in the last 16 years. The Disney films of the Renaissance period now appear to have much more in common with the Disney films of Walt Disney's era than those of Bob Iger's tenure (from 2005), with Pixar, Marvel and Lucasfilm forming a large part of 21st century Disney filmmaking, along with bigger franchises and grander synergy opportunities across more platforms and channels than were previously available.

The traditional TDG and TDG 2.0 therefore represent updated versions of the GDAP notions of traditional and 'new' Disney, but the FDG remains constant – there is little evidence of a traditional FDG and an FDG 2.0. Shared audience perceptions of the term 'Disney film' continue to conjure up the same images of animation, catchy songs, high production values, predictability, and accessibility, even when audiences are aware of Disney's ownership of Marvel, Lucasfilm and Pixar. Perceptions of Disney have not caught up with the actuality of Disney output – the FDG has not caught up with the TDG. The difference between the TDG and FDG is one of attitudes towards Disney, and

therefore has a marked impact on how the attributes of the FDG can be interpreted.

While one individual may consider the accessibility of Disney films to be a positive attribute, because it means that there is a shared language to communicate with their children or international neighbours, others may consider the accessibility of Disney films to have a negative spin on account of the way that they crowd out independent animation and non-Hollywood films from the multiplex. Or the perceived predictability of a Disney film may be seen as a great comfort to those who enjoy the films, but a sign of banality to those who do not enjoy them. It is therefore apparent that an individual's perception of the FDG is dependent on their attitude towards Disney more generally, although it is not necessarily true that being a fan of Disney means enjoying every Disney film, and vice versa.

It could be argued that the +FDG attributes are generally linked by their appeal to emotional pleasures, while –FDG attributes appeal to intellectual concerns. For example, the +FDG attitude would interpret emotive elements of comfort, nostalgia, and social bonding from the attributes of the FDG, while the –FDG attitude would focus on intellectual concerns such as plot complexity, problems with representation and Disney's dominant role in global culture. Another difference is that the –FDG attitude is less likely to be based on the perception of the films, and more likely to place Disney films within the wider corporate world of Disney.

Several respondents claimed that, as adults, the 'magic' of Disney was no longer available to them, as exemplified by the following remark:

> I have become cynical and think more about the 'real' story
> behind the film (M, 45+, Scottish)

This respondent's claim to have 'become cynical' is a common one, and indicates that his response to Disney films has become less emotional and more intellectual or rational in tone. The implication is that fans of Disney films respond with their hearts, while detractors respond with their heads – or to put it another way, fans continue to watch Disney films with an emotive +FDG attitude, while detractors employ an intellectual –FDG attitude to avoid them.

6.6.1 A Personal Case Study: Applying the FDG

As a case study, I can apply the FDG model to my own experiences of Disney films. As a liberally minded gay man, educated to degree level in humanities and the social sciences, it might be expected that I would find Disney films problematic for their lack of gay representation particularly, as well as the many other intellectualised criticisms levelled at Disney films. However, I respond to Disney films on an emotional level, appreciating their aesthetics, music, and the feelings that they elicit, so I follow the +FDG attitude.

I do acknowledge that certain Disney films can prove to be problematic, especially some of the older films when viewed through a 21st century lens, but I do not believe that such films are actually representative of Disney films generally, nor do they cause irreparable harm to audiences. I also believe that if one avoided all Hollywood films that poorly represent women and minorities, film choices would be severely limited; the problem does not only lie with Disney.

Part of my attraction to Disney films is that they are so varied, incorporating animation, superheroes, science fiction and natural history documentaries, among others, yet these films share qualities that I value in my media consumption – optimism, light-heartedness and music I can sing along to. In fact, my own resistance to the usual perceptions of Disney films, described by many of my research participants herein, is partly what informed the direction of the current research.

It is possible to understand and share attitudes of both the –FDG and +FDG, and as audiences see more Disney films, increase their experience of the wider Disney world, and make new life choices (particularly having children) they will often be led to reassess and readjust their understandings of the FDG and their attitude towards it. This will require renegotiation of what they already know about Disney films, especially as the TDG evolves into the TDG 2.0 and beyond.

Thus, having explored the FDG and determined the different positive and negative attitudes that it encompasses in the present chapter, and with definitions of the TDG in its traditional and 2.0 forms established in Chapter 5, I

turn to my final research question. In Chapter 7 I seek to compare the TDG and the FDG to answer the question: how do adult audiences (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films?

Chapter 7
RQ3: How do adult audiences (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films? Comparing the TDG and the FDG

7.1 Introduction

> Although I enjoy Disney movies more as an adult, I think I also judge them more harshly. I don't know if it's my nostalgia filter talking or if it's just because I expect excellence from them, but if a movie is lackluster I'm more vocal about it than a lackluster movie from any other studio. They're Disney, I guess I just expect the best. (F, 25-34, American)

As a young Disney audience member matures into adulthood, their idealised perception of what a Disney film is and how the Walt Disney Company (WDC) operates has the potential to be challenged. Amy M. Davis has suggested that 'Disney fans tend to be lifelong fans for a reason: the films they enjoyed as children continue to be meaningful to them as adults because, like the heroes and heroines of the film, the viewer has continued to learn and grow during their journey through life' (2013, p.253). However, David Buckingham counters that 'becoming – and being perceived to be – an adult necessarily involves suppressing elements of one's behaviour which others might deem to be inappropriately 'childish'' (2000, p.7), thus suggesting that audiences are likely to shun Disney films, rather than become lifelong fans.

The meanings that audiences draw from Disney films are not necessarily always as positive as Davis implies or as suppressed as Buckingham suggests – the respondent quoted above illustrates a more nuanced attitude to Disney films. As an audience member experiences further education and exposure to a greater number of films from other film studios, the appeal that Disney used to hold in childhood may not in fact endure into adulthood. And even if the appeal of Disney does continue into adulthood, a viewer's relationship with Disney

films, individually and collectively, will inevitably go through an ongoing process of renegotiation.

Audiences negotiate and renegotiate their relationships with films on a regular basis, and these negotiations, like the effects and meanings of a film, 'are not solely context-, text-, or audience-generated [but] result from the interaction of all three' (Plantinga, 2009, p.13). These relationships are informed by the audience member's exposure to other media, their educational background and other demographic factors, and even their current mood, as well as the films themselves. Renegotiated relationships with media can clearly be seen in the case of Disney films, since they tend to be first experienced *by* children as media *for* children. This perception of Disney films being for children lingers into adulthood, and the pleasures of such films either continue or become closed off to adult viewers, by choice or otherwise.

It has been suggested that 'audiences often choose films on the basis of genre, stars, critical review, or, as [Carl Plantinga argues], on the basis of the kind of affective experience they believe such films will afford' (2009, p.14). Although the affective experience of Disney film audiences has not been a part of the present analysis, it can still be seen that respondents are aware of a particular affect that Disney films offer to audiences, which is often referred to as 'Disney magic', but also includes elements of nostalgia. Such an affective experience is often actively resisted by audiences who finds Disney films to be problematic and socially conservative, although as Plantinga notes, 'the audience member who self-consciously rejects the ideology of a film during its viewing […] may nonetheless enjoy many of the intended responses generated by the film' (2009, p.14). Thus taking pleasure from a Disney film yet rejecting its perceived ideology (or that of the WDC more widely) clearly will necessitate significant renegotiation of relations between audience and film.

Those audiences who overlook or are unaware of such perceived ideological concerns are capable of experiencing the particular affective experience they perceive Disney films to offer. They are willing to relive the experiences of their childhood, to indulge in nostalgia or to enjoy the simple pleasures they find in a Disney film. But that does not mean that these audiences do not experience renegotiations of their relationships with Disney

films – they may still have to negotiate feelings of guilt for enjoying children's entertainment, or adjust to the changing nature of Disney films, as represented by the TDG 2.0.

As adult audiences age, grow richer, reproduce or become more cognisant of the commercial practices of media conglomerates their relationships with Disney films will continue to be renegotiated, whether their perceptions of Disney are positive, negative or indifferent, or based on the Tangible Disney Genre (TDG) or the Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG). When former Disney story consultant Christopher Vogler noted that 'Disney animated films were conceived to work for all levels of the audience, with physical gags for the youngest kids, irreverent verbal wit and action for teenagers, and sophisticated in-jokes for the adults' (2007, p.259) he was talking about a spectrum of audiences. However, he could also have been describing the experiences of a singular audience member and their changing relationships with Disney films as they move from child to teenager to adult.

The researchers of the Global Disney Audiences Project found that their respondents were resistant to 'any serious examination – never mind any criticism – of Disney's meaning and impact [and noted that this] strong affirmation may well lie in the connection between Disney and childhood – a connection that confers a special status to Disney products' (Wasko and Meehan, 2001, p.331). Such resistance to a close examination of Disney was echoed by one of my respondents:

> I have found in talking to college students that sometimes they
> can be very defensive about Disney films and not want to look
> at them as critically as they do other films. (F, 35-44, American)

Disney clearly occupies a special place in the memories of many adult audiences, and the challenging of these memories by alternate readings or perceptions of what Disney means and what a Disney film is necessitates a renegotiation of their relationships with Disney films. Awareness or ignorance of the differences between the FDG and TDG can affect audience relationships and enjoyment of Disney films.

In this chapter I compare the two Disney genres, the TDG and FDG, and consider the question of how adult audiences renegotiate their relationships

with Disney films, as well as how these relationships are influenced by the intersection between the traditional TDG, the TDG 2.0, and positive and negative variations of the FDG. I also use data drawn from across the multiple mixed methods employed throughout this research to explore the different ways in which adults respond to Disney films, and in which Disney responds to adult audiences. Finally, I turn to autoethnography to apply the findings from this chapter to my own experiences as a Disney fan, in order to draw some conclusions about how adult audiences (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films.

7.2 Comparing Disney Genres

The relationships that adult audiences have with Disney films depend upon their perceptions of what Disney films are. These perceptions were described as the Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG) in Chapter 6, and can be understood from both negative and positive perspectives. However, the FDG does not necessarily accurately reflect the content and themes of Disney's film output, thus a second Disney genre, the Tangible Disney Genre (TDG), was described in Chapter 5.

The TDG was based on a survey of the tangible output of 390 Disney films released between 1937 and 2015, thus can be considered comprehensive. It is important to note that the attributes of the TDG are based on averages and prominent themes across the range of Disney films, and thus not every Disney film will necessarily reflect all (or in a minority of cases, any) of these attributes. However, it is still possible to compare the TDG with the FDG, and to consider the consequences when these two genres do not match up. For example, if a particular Disney film is representative of the TDG, but does not match up with the FDG there is the potential that audiences will find it difficult to interpret it as a Disney film, which may have consequences for its box office success, or on an audience's reception to the film.

An example of the mismatch between what audiences think a Disney film is (FDG) and what tangible evidence shows a Disney film to be (TDG) is illustrated in Figure 31. Here, data previously presented in Figure 13 and Figure 27 have been combined into a new figure to illustrate the differences between

the genres found across 390 Disney films, as identified by the output survey, and the genres that audiences expect to find in Disney films, as reported in the sample survey.
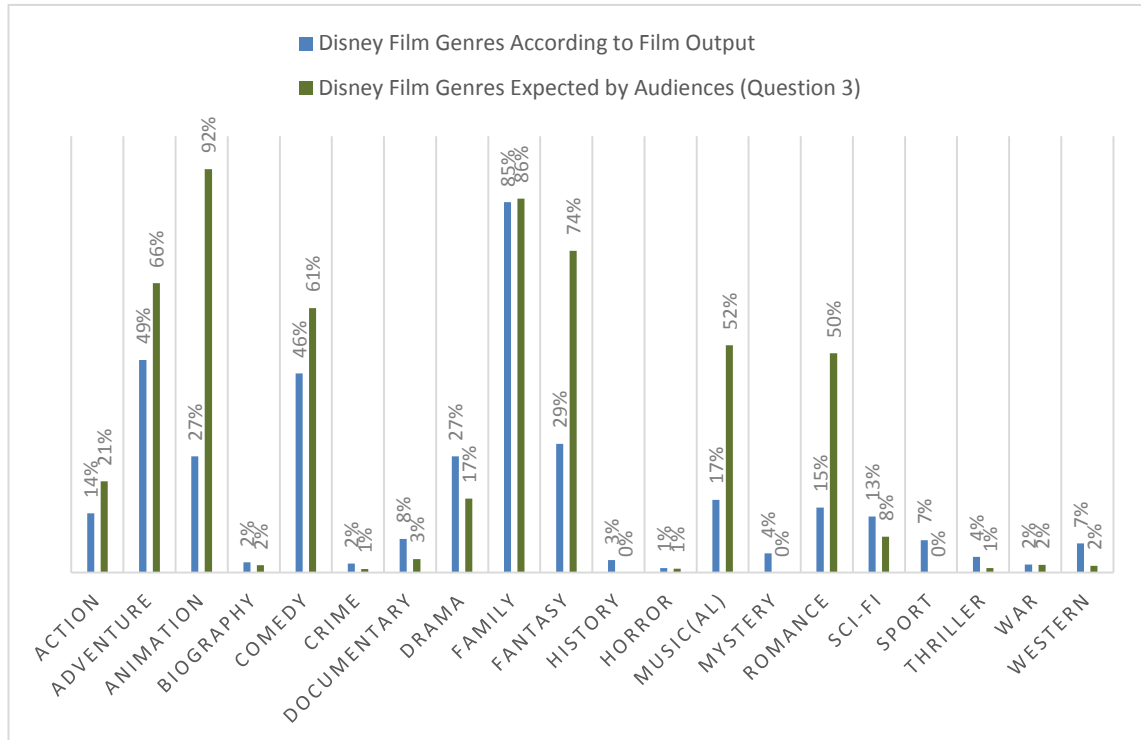
Figure 31: Comparison of genres: film output vs audience expectation

Source: Output survey (IMDb) and sample survey responses

The biggest mismatch shown in this data set concerns animation, with 92% of audiences associating Disney films with this genre, when in fact only 27% of Disney films released between 1937 and 2015 were animated. Similarly, audiences have a much higher expectation of seeing the genres of fantasy, musical and romance represented in a Disney film compared with how often these genres have actually appeared across Disney's film output. Conversely, the genres that audiences underestimate and therefore do not expect from Disney films include documentary, sci-fi and westerns, although these genres are actually underrepresented across Disney's film output generally in comparison to other genres, so the difference here is not as significant.

The mismatch regarding animation is significant because of the commonly understood and accepted connotation that animation is for children. Animation historian Michael Barrier identifies television as the root of the connection between animation and children, noting that:

> while making cartoons more accessible, [television] has made them seem more a children's medium than ever before, by presenting them at times and in formats best suited to children's viewing (2003, p.ix)[126]

The equation of animation with children's media, kick-started by the cartoon series that began airing on television in the 1960s, has had the effect of devaluing and diminishing the significance of animation as an entertainment option for adult audiences. Animation has come to be seen as a trivial form of entertainment, associated with uneducated, immature, childish audiences of children rather than their intelligent, mature, responsible adult counterparts, as indicated by comments made by respondents that were discussed in section 6.5. During story meetings on *The Lion King* (1994b) there was debate over the depiction of the death of Mufasa, including the argument that the filmmakers 'were making a movie for the entire spectrum of the audience, not just for infants who might be traumatized by the scene' (Vogler, 2007, p.263), indicating how Disney's animated films are made with broad audiences in mind.

But Disney does not help matters by prioritising animated films over its live-action output. This prioritisation may be seen to be a matter of necessity, since it is much easier to monetise and merchandise animated characters than live-action characters, particularly those that populate dramas and documentaries. Disney's former Director of Corporate Synergy Lorraine Santoli observed that:

> …the films that worked the best with consumer products of course are the animated films. And because a film that's not animated, you're never sure that it's going to be a hit (interviewed 15th July 2016).

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[126] Ironically, Barrier also notes that when 'the studios that made theatrical cartoons began metamorphosing into television-cartoon studios[, the] change started at Disney's' (2003, p.559).

Animated characters are voiced by real-life actors but it is rarely the voices that are monetised through merchandise. Live-action characters also have actors behind them, but are more likely to want a cut of the revenue generated by use of their likeness on consumer products[127]. The costumed heroes of live-action Marvel and Star Wars films are exceptions to this matter of merchandising, but in these cases it is generally the costumes that are rendered in action figure form rather than the likenesses of the actors who play these characters.

One way to explore the differences between the TDG and FDG is to consider the different subsidiary studios that are part of Walt Disney Studios (WDS, the structure of which is illustrated in Appendix 1b). In the following section I therefore explore the knowledge that audiences have of the various Disney subsidiary studios and consider how this knowledge intersects with their understandings of the TDG, and how this influences the FDG and their relationship with Disney films. In particular, the impact of Disney's recent studio acquisitions and expansion will be analysed as part of the TDG 2.0.

7.2.1 Influence of Subsidiary Studios on FDG

Question 10 of the sample survey asked respondents to list the film studios that they thought or knew were part of the broader Walt Disney Studios (WDS). They were provided with a blank space to share any knowledge they had of WDS and its constituent parts, rather than given a list of options to choose from to prevent any lucky guesses. Prior to Question 10, respondents had been answering questions based on their own understanding of the Disney film concept. As was established in Chapter 6, these understandings related mainly to animation, particularly those films from the animated Classics line.

Question 10 (and Question 11) was therefore intended to introduce the concept of Disney's subsidiary studios into both the survey and to respondents' knowledge and understanding of Disney, to discover how much they already knew about WDS. Answers to these questions also provided insight into how

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[127] My forthcoming book from Theme Park Press, which chronicles the spin-off media associated with every Disney film (including sequels, TV series, theme park rides, comic strips, DVD releases, soundtracks), will illustrate how Disney's animated films have been re-released and exploited across Disney's numerous media concerns more readily than their live-action counterparts.

the subsidiary studios were perceived, if they were perceived of at all. It was thought that the identification of subsidiary studios would act as disruptors to the Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG) perceived by audiences, challenging initial perceptions.

Of the 88% of respondents who provided an answer to Question 10, 11% professed that they did not know any Disney film studios, or did not understand the concept of film studios. Of those who answered the question, 75% identified Pixar Animation Studios as a part of WDS, while 20% named Walt Disney Animation Studios as a discrete entity, as shown in Figure 32. Around a third of respondents were aware that Marvel Studios and Lucasfilm were now Disney subsidiaries.
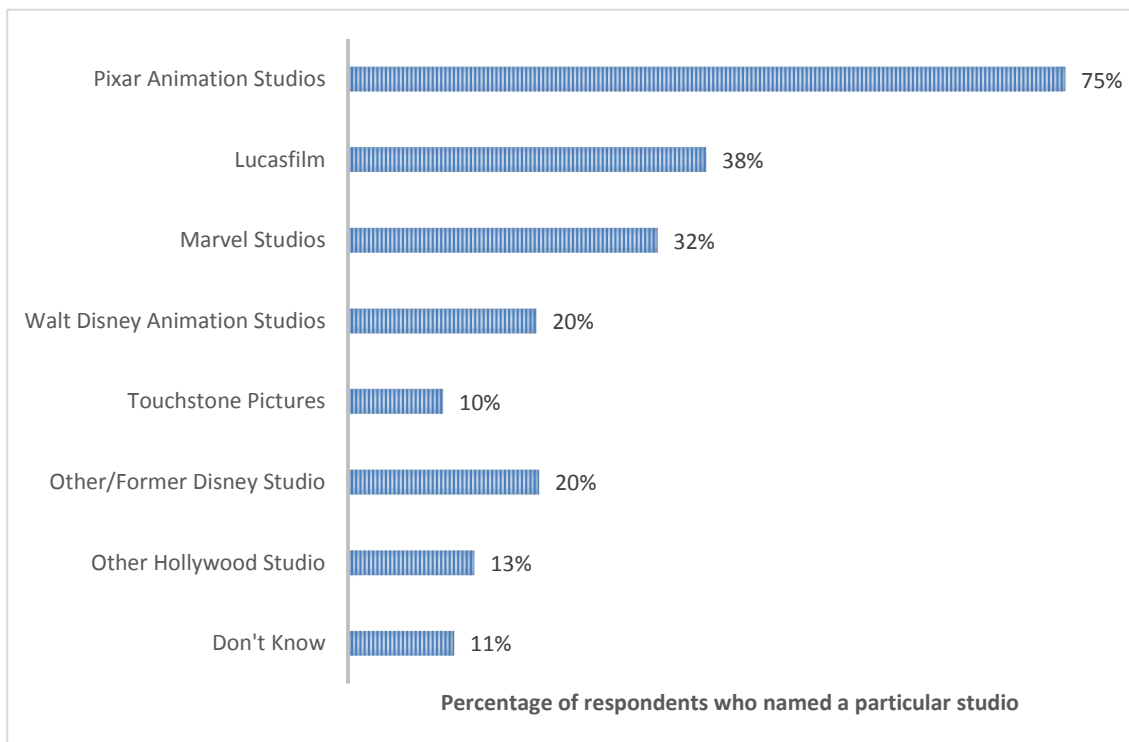
Figure 32: Film studios believed to be part of WDS (Question 10)[128]

Source: Sample survey responses.

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[128] Percentages shown in Figure 32 relate to the 3,098 respondents who provided an answer to Question 10, rather than the entire cohort of 3,524. For example, where 75% of those who answered the question named Pixar, the percentage of the whole cohort was 66%.

4% of respondents identified Buena Vista, the former name of Disney's distribution company (now Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures) as a studio, while another 4% also named Miramax, a former studio that was generally kept at arm's length from the Disney name and brand while under WDC ownership. The same percentage believed that DreamWorks was a part of Disney, perhaps because of the co-production and distribution deals that have existed between DreamWorks and Touchstone, or perhaps because of DreamWorks' recent successes with animated films and Disney being synonymous with animation. Touchstone itself was identified by just 10% of respondents, while only 23 individuals named Hollywood Pictures as a Disney studio, and 109 and 9 respondents respectively identified Miramax and Dimension.

These figures, and evidence gathered from focus groups, seem to indicate that Disney's recent acquisitions of Lucasfilm and Marvel Studios have passed unnoticed by the majority of audiences. However, not everyone is unaware of Disney's recent studio purchases. For example, when asked what might be expected if I were to screen a Disney film for the assembled focus group, one participant observed:

> But then also, Disney do Star Wars now don't they? So if you were saying we're going to watch a Disney film now I'd wonder if you were going to trick us and show us Star Wars because we were expecting to see cutsie cartoons. (F, British)

Disney's association with Pixar is much more well known, perhaps partly because it is an animation studio and thus more readily associated with Disney, and partly because Pixar films have been linked to Disney since the release of Pixar's first feature, *Toy Story* (1995g). Pixar have therefore enjoyed a much longer cinematic relationship with Disney than either Lucasfilm or Marvel[129].

However, it was surprising that in a handful of comments made in both the questionnaire and focus groups there were several people under the mistaken impression that Pixar was no longer a part of Disney. The same focus

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[129] Disney's non-cinematic relationship with Lucasfilm is actually longer than Disney's relationship with Pixar. Lucasfilm collaborated with Disney theme parks to create the Star Tours attraction at Disneyland in 1987 (and later at both Walt Disney World and Tokyo Disneyland in 1989, and Disneyland Paris in 1992) as well as several Indiana Jones themed attractions, beginning with the Indiana Jones Epic Stunt Spectacular at Walt Disney World in 1989 (Smith, 2016, pp.386-387 & 707).

group participant who thought that I was going to trick her with a Star Wars film also said:

> …I have to say I'm not quite sure these days what's Pixar and what's Disney, because they're now separate aren't they? (F, British)

When asked why she thought that Pixar was no longer part of Disney, the participant had no answer. It is unclear where this belief stems from, and would be worth following up in future research.

The general lack of awareness shared by audiences about some of Disney's subsidiary studios was revealed by several respondents, and they did not always appreciate finding out the extent of Disney's cinematic reach:

> Didn't know until after doing this survey that Disney was in charge of many movies that I really enjoy (M, 25-34, Mexican)

> You've made me realise their tentacles go wider than I thought. Damn you!! (F, 35-44, British)

Such responses not only illustrate a lack of familiarity with the workings of the film industry but describing their wide-ranging 'tentacles' equates Disney with a monster infiltrating the entertainment industry, a view that was shared by other participants (see section 6.5.3).

The data generated in Question 10 suggests that the studio that is more closely aligned to the FDG as perceived by audiences – Pixar Animation Studios – is more readily identifiable as part of Disney, compared with those studios whose films do not match up with the FDG – Marvel, Lucasfilm and Touchstone. The fact that few people separated out WDAS from Disney more generally also suggests that animation is considered the default aspect of the FDG.

Having asked respondents to list WDS subsidiaries from memory in Question 10, Question 11 followed up with an amended version of Question 4 (who do you think are the target audiences for Disney films? See Figure 21 and section 6.3.1 for discussion), which asked respondents to identify the target audiences of each of the major WDS subsidiary studios: Pixar, Marvel,

Lucasfilm, Walt Disney Animation Studios (WDAS) and Touchstone[130]. The results are illustrated in Table 15, which shows the percentages of all 3,524 respondents who selected particular audiences, as well as the results from Question 4 as a point of comparison.

	'Disney' (Q4)	WDAS	Pixar	Lucasfilm	Marvel	Touch-stone
Children <12 yrs.	58%	61%	51%	11%	13%	4%
Teenagers	13%	16%	28%	41%	67%	17%
Parents	26%	34%	34%	22%	22%	17%
Adults	10%	7%	18%	42%	54%	31%
Men	4%	4%	10%	35%	54%	18%
Women	10%	13%	14%	19%	23%	21%
Boys	20%	27%	29%	28%	46%	7%
Girls	29%	36%	29%	12%	14%	7%
Families	48%	50%	47%	21%	19%	13%
All of the above	n/a	35%	50%	38%	26%	24%
Don't know	n/a	3%	2%	14%	4%	39%

Table 15: Perceived target audiences for Disney studios (Question 11)

Source: Sample survey responses.

Responses to Question 11 indicate that audiences do differentiate between different Disney studios when it comes to who they think their target audiences are. The pattern of data for WDAS matched that of Disney generally (as per data from Question 4), with several more people opting for boys, girls and parents as target audiences, with children under 12 and families again thought to be the most likely audiences. The only demographic to see a fall in figures was adults. These results reinforce the idea that animation is believed to be for children or those who have no choice but to accompany children in their viewing.

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[130] Touchstone was included in the question because, despite being dormant in recent years, it was created with a particularly adult audience in mind. I thus wanted to gauge whether respondents were aware of this target audience. Question 10 proved that 10% of respondents were aware of the studio.

It should be remembered that 90% of survey respondents claimed that they enjoy watching Disney films, yet only a relatively small percentage think that animated Disney films are targeted to adult audiences. It might be reasonable to expect that more of those who enjoy Disney films would have selected either adults or 'all of the above' as answers to this question, in order to include themselves in the target audiences. It would instead appear that those adults who enjoy Disney films enjoy them despite a perception that they are targeted at audiences of children.

Half of respondents considered that Pixar makes films for everyone, although 51% selected children under 12 as their primary target audience. More than twice as many respondents considered Pixar to be aimed at adults compared with the animated films of WDAS, and the figure for men also more than doubled in comparison. This adds credence to the idea, raised elsewhere in the questionnaire, that Pixar makes animated films that are more targeted at and thus suitable for adult audiences.

Lucasfilm was a mystery for 14% of respondents, possibly because they did not recognise the name of the studio behind the Star Wars franchise. Those who did recognise Lucasfilm selected adults and teenagers as the primary audiences for their films, with markedly fewer choosing children or families. Here too the gender split seen in the results for Disney and WDAS was switched, with men considered more likely to be the target audience for Lucasfilm than women at 35% vs 19%, although oddly the figure for boys did not rise as much as the figures for girls fell when compared with results for Disney generally.

Similarly, Marvel films were considered to be targeted at men and boys rather than women and girls. Several respondents raised concerns about the ways in which Marvel pitches their films and their associated merchandising at male audiences, indicating that although men are thought to be the target audience, it should not be forgotten that many women enjoy the films too, as one respondent pointed out:

> I love Star Wars and the Marvel movies, but as a woman, a
> mother, and a feminist, they do a very poor job marketing these
> to women and young girls (F, 25-34, American)

The biggest response regarding Marvel's target audience was from the 67% who opted for teenagers as a primary audience, the largest, most confident response to any of the options provided in Question 11. In the same way that animated films are not considered adult fare, costumed comic book heroes appear to be thought of as more suitable for teenage audiences. Only 13% of respondents considered Marvel films to be aimed at children under 12 – this is perhaps a higher number than expected considering that all Marvel films have been given 12A/PG-13 certificates that specifically advise caution in allowing 12 year olds and younger to watch such films.

Finally, Touchstone, a studio that was active from the 1980s to 2000s but has become mostly dormant today, was an unknown quantity for 39% of respondents, more so than any of the other studios. Of those who knew Touchstone or were prepared to hazard a guess, 31% thought that adults were their primary audience. This seems rather a low figure considering that Touchstone was created by the WDC to produce more adult fare. Very few respondents selected children, boys or girls as target audiences, and there was no significant split between genders, indicating that the Touchstone brand has made little impact on audiences in the last three decades. While one could carry out an output survey of Touchstone films to determine a Tangible Touchstone Genre, audience's unfamiliarity with the studio would preclude the description of a Fantasy Touchstone Genre. Touchstone's output was not included in the output survey, and thus does not contribute to the TDG, nor does it contribute to the FDG, as data from Questions 10 and 11 have shown.

Responses to Question 11 indicate that audience understandings of the FDG do not translate directly to Disney's subsidiary studios. Disney's recent diversification into the realms of comic book superheroes and space opera sagas with Marvel and Lucasfilm has not (yet) had a significant impact on how audiences perceive the FDG, therefore modern Disney – exemplified by the TDG 2.0 – does not have a complimentary FDG 2.0 analogue in the collective perception of adult audiences. In the next section I will compare the traditional TDG and TDG 2.0 and consider how differences between the two may cause adult audiences to renegotiate their relationships with Disney films, and thus potentially adjust their perceptions of the FDG.

7.2.2 Traditional TDG vs TDG 2.0

The differences between the target audiences chosen by respondents in Question 11 for a generalised Disney film and for releases from Lucasfilm and Marvel suggest that they do not yet fit into the FDG that is perceived by audiences. Disney's billion-dollar acquisitions of these studios were widely reported in print and online media, with the Lucasfilm deal attracting particular attention due to the historic, global popularity of the Star Wars franchise. Disney Store customers and Disney theme park guests will be aware of the connections between Darth Vader, Captain America and Mickey Mouse as the characters all exist alongside each other on store shelves and attractions. However, for many audience members who have not visited a Disney Store or theme park, or do not follow Hollywood business news, Disney's acquisitions of these studios represent a blind spot in their knowledge of the WDC.

Some respondents were simply unaware of Disney's ownership of these studios until the questionnaire enlightened them, while others knew about the acquisitions, but had forgotten about them until they were reminded, including the following respondent:

> I didn't know that Marvel and Lucasfilm were part of Disney. I mean, I knew about Lucasfilm because of Lucas selling it, but forgot! (M, 45+, Canadian)

The Disney that exists in the 'popular public memory' (Bate, 2010, p.251) that informs the FDG has clearly not yet incorporated the Disney of the TDG 2.0. David Bate (2010) has referred to the effect that the creation of museums had on public memory, using the example of the French Revolution and the way that public institutions highlighted some events, but excised less palatable events from the public record. Bate suggests that 'remembering also institutes a kind of forgetting' (2010, p.246), a concept that is reflected in the way that audiences remember the animated side of Disney that is reinforced by Disney's promotional activities, and forget those films and attributes that do not fit into the FDG they remember.

Several respondents were not convinced that Marvel and Lucasfilm (and even Pixar) productions could really be considered to be 'true' Disney films, or

they were unsure about the impact these studios might have on Disney's filmmaking future:

> With the purchase of [Lucasfilm] and Marvel, Disney are clearly looking to broaden their target audience. I'm not sure whether Disney is a brand which will help or hinder this aim. (F, 25-34, British)

> I consider true Disney separate from its subsidiaries, because Marvel/Lucas are so well-defined that to include them as Disney films really changes the idea of what Disney is. (F, 35-44, American)

Although I would agree that Lucasfilm and Marvel brought their own well-defined brands (and existing audiences) with them to Disney, I would still argue that since coming under Disney's corporate umbrella (and even before that), the films produced by these studios have still adhered to the TDG 2.0, with little to separate them from the recent live-action releases from Walt Disney Pictures. The films of Marvel, Lucasfilm, Pixar and Walt Disney Pictures today are predominantly fantasy adventures tempered with comedy, which rely on the familiarity of franchises and remakes to draw in audiences with a mix of nostalgia and a hint of progressive casting and character choices.

One respondent provided the following assessment of Disney today:

> I find myself marvelling (pun not intended) at the sheer ubiquitous conglomerate weight and power of today's Disney, a position the company has only really been in for less than a decade. With the acquisitions of Marvel and Lucas Film they now have a license to print money several times a year seemingly forever! Whether I'll continue to give them my money solely depends on the product, but as they're basically streamlining and locking down their house styles within an inch of their lives (perhaps the first rule of old school Disney still in play) then there will be zero room for imagination or experimentation, which leads to each new generation raised on a mainstream media devoid of a little craziness and fresh voices. That is Disney's future – unless they start taking a few risks. (M, 45+, British)

It is hard to disagree with this commentary, especially since (as was shown in Chapter 5) those films that do not adhere sufficiently to the TDG formula tend to

suffer at the box office. Disney seems to respond to these perceived failures by taking fewer risks on 'craziness and fresh voices' and continuing to produce the remakes and franchise films that have proved successful with paying audiences.

It is perhaps unfair to lay the blame for Disney's lack of risk-taking solely on their film production choices, when audiences have a part to play in not flocking to the riskier films that do not match the FDG, such as *Tomorrowland* (2015m), however many millions Disney spends on their promotion. And while lukewarm or negative critical reviews are also of no help in ensuring the less-FDG-like films are successful, poor reviews have not stopped audiences flocking to FDG adherents, such as the later films of the Pirates of the Caribbean franchise.

Variety (Kelley, 2017) has reported that of the eight films that have to date earned over $500 million at the US box office, half were produced and distributed by Disney studios: *The Avengers* (2012b), *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015k), *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (2016k), and *Beauty and the Beast* (2017a)[131]. These very recent successes attest to the modern WDC being 'probably the world's leading purveyor of entertainment' (Norman, 2016, p.36), as referenced by the previous respondent, and to the earning potential of franchise entries and remakes (not to mention rising ticket prices).

Over 60 of my respondents were reluctant to consider Disney films to be anything other than the animated films that they encountered in their youth, regardless of whether they enjoyed Marvel or Lucasfilm releases today:

> I would consider Disney films to be movies like *Aladdin*, *Fantasia*, *Lion King*, etc. though I know Disney owns Marvel whose films I love. […] (F, 25-34, Canadian)

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[131] The other four films to earn over $500 million (to 28th May 2017) were: *Jurassic World* (2015h), the fourth entry in the Jurassic Park franchise; *The Dark Knight* (2008c), the second part of Christopher Nolan's Batman trilogy; and two films directed by James Cameron: *Titanic* (1997i) and *Avatar* (2009a). Although released by 20th Century Fox, *Avatar* (the only film on the list not part of a franchise or based on real events) has links to Disney through 'Pandora – The World of Avatar', a theme park extension that opened at Disney's Animal Kingdom Park at the Walt Disney World Resort, Florida on 27th May 2017. [NB: Since completion of the thesis, Disney has bought 20th Century Fox, thus bringing the *Avatar* properties into the Walt Disney Company].

> I know that Marvel and such are Disney too, but people of my
> Generation when [they] talk about Disney talk about *Cinderella*,
> *Robin Hood*, *Snow White* etc. The classic Fairy Tales which
> Disney took and made [into] movies for children. (F, 25-34,
> Luxembourger)

It is interesting that the Luxembourgish respondent refers to 'my Generation' and then proceeds to list as examples films that were initially released in 1950, 1973 and 1937 respectively, long before she was born. Such ignorance of Disney film history is common among many audiences, especially those who say they prefer the 'old films' and mean those from the relatively recent Disney Renaissance (1989-1999), not the 80 year old *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937c).

Audiences' ignorance of Disney chronology is likely borne of the deliberately timeless quality of Disney's animated features – especially stories that have no specific historical or geographical reference points[132] – as well as the recirculation of animated Classics in cinemas and home media for new generations of children to encounter. Just as the traditional TDG has given way to the TDG 2.0, there is a more evident division between old ('classic') and new animated Disney films, with traditional 2D animation having given way almost exclusively to 3D CGI animation.

Disney's abandonment of 2D animation has not passed unnoticed by several respondents, who mourn its loss:

> In general, I prefer Disney's 2D animation to their newer 3D
> work. I simply like the look of it more, and I'm more impressed
> by hand drawn works than CGI ones. However, I did really
> enjoy *Zootopia*. It was a fun movie, and it sends a great
> message to kids. (O, 18-24, Canadian)

> Among animated films, I think it's a shame 2D animation has all
> but vanished. I'd be more interested in animated films if there
> were more to look at than the same old CGI cartoony
> characters. (M, 35-44, American)

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[132] The non-specific, fantastical nature of Disney film locations or timelines, as demonstrated in the fairy tales of *Cinderella* (1950a) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959b), are not very different to the films of the Star Wars franchise, set a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away.

It seems that although modern CGI animated Disney films are better at representation and providing positive messages, they lose something of the artistry that audiences appreciated with traditional 2D animation. With DreamWorks, Blue Sky, Illumination and many more studios producing CGI animated films, Disney no longer has the monopoly on the medium and thus perhaps their animated films do not stand out as much as they once did. Disney does, however, have a reputation for quality animation, whichever style it is rendered in, compared to other animation studios. Disney's critical animated success is also evidenced by the fact that it has produced 11 of the 16 winners of the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature since its inception in 2001[133].

Disney's attempts to update and modernise its filmmaking output, moving from the traditional TDG to the TDG 2.0, have generally been viewed positively by audiences who were unhappy with the problematic nature of 'classic' Disney films, but one respondent made a very important point about Disney's modernisation strategy:

> Viewing the early films now is an eye-opener due to the of-the-time depiction of sexism, racism and social [stereotypes] (e.g. *Dumbo*, *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*). Having two daughters it is also especially sad to see them absorbing the monotonous drivel of 'must look pretty and find a handsome prince to marry and live Happily Ever After with'. Whatever strides Disney are making into moving away from this, their back-catalogue will always be a fixture of this unfortunate brainwashing. (M, 35-44, British)

The final sentence is key, for while Disney films of the last decade have begun to address issues of gender, race and sexuality, Disney continues to keep films that many critics find offensive in circulation. Only the infamous *Song of the South* (1946b) is truly inaccessible (outside of bootlegs), although strangely it lives on in the Disney theme parks[134].

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[133] Eight of the winners were produced by Pixar Animation Studios, and three by Walt Disney Animation Studios. Winning years were: 2003-2004, 2007-2010, and 2012-2016.

[134] Songs and characters from *Song of the South*, including the Oscar winning 'Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah', feature in the Splash Mountain rollercoaster, which debuted at Disneyland in 1989 and at Walt Disney World and Tokyo Disneyland in 1992 (Smith, 2016, p.703). One wonders what those guests (children particularly) unfamiliar with the film make of the references to *Song of the South* on this attraction.

Animated Classics such as *Dumbo* (1941a) with its black-caricatured crow characters, *Sleeping Beauty* (1959b) and its passive heroine, and *Aladdin* (1992a), which has been accused of racially insensitive depictions of Arabs[135] all turn up in British Bank Holiday television schedules, on Sky Movies, and as part of regular home media promotions (see Figure 10). For example, between 15th October and 11th November 2016, the UK's Sky Cinema Disney aired *Dumbo* seven times and *Aladdin* eleven times, and the former has been re-released on DVD and Blu-ray at least five times in the UK since 2001 and is also available on major streaming services.

Disney's recent live-action remakes of animated Classics provide Disney's filmmakers with the opportunity to update, modernise and 'fix' the problematic storytelling of the older animated films. However, the presence of these remakes also acts as encouragement for audiences to reengage with (their memories of) these older, problematic films, or at least draws attention to deficiencies that audience members may have previously overlooked, wilfully or otherwise. Thus a further renegotiation of their relationships with Disney films is necessitated. Very often home media releases of the film remake come packaged along with the original film, or the original is aired prominently on Disney's television channels to promote the new version, so the original never really has a chance to leave the popular public memory. For example, *The Jungle Book* (1967c) aired 13 times on Sky Cinema channels during a four week period in 2016, at the same time that the 1967 version and *The Jungle Book* (2016f) remake were available to buy in a 2-Movie collection on Blu-ray in the UK.

Not only do changes within the lives of adult audiences influence the (re)negotiation of their relationships with Disney films, but also the changes that Disney has implemented in their ongoing filmmaking activities (which also contribute to the evolution of the TDG 2.0), as well as Disney's curation of their

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[135] Disney faced criticism from the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee following the release of *Aladdin* in 1992 due to lyrics that featured in the song 'Arabian Nights' being deemed racist: 'Oh, I come from a land / From a faraway place / Where the caravan camels roam. / Where they cut off your ear / If they don't like your face / It's barbaric, but hey, it's home'. Disney revised the offending lines for all subsequent releases to: 'Where it's flat and immense / And the heat is intense / It's barbaric, but hey, it's home' but *Aladdin* still attracts charges of racism and xenophobia (Griffin, 2000, pp.208-210).

back catalogue (which keeps the traditional TDG in circulation and in the public memory). Additional sources of influence for these renegotiated relationships come through audience experiences with Disney-sanctioned and audience-created materials connected with the films (discussed below), aside from the films themselves, and through Disney's approach to its subsidiary studios. Although it may be true that 'today's Disney rarely refrains from adapting its brand image in order to achieve the widest possible consumer base' (Giroux and Pollock, 2010, p.207), it has been shown that audience perceptions of Disney's brand image can be resistant to such adaptation.

Having considered the influence of subsidiary studios on Disney genres and the differences between the traditional TDG and TDG 2.0, in the next section I will investigate the differences, similarities and resultant consequences of these comparisons between the TDG and the FDG.

7.2.3 TDG vs FDG

The traditional TDG, TDG 2.0 and FDG attributes (both positive and negative) that were described in the conclusions of Chapters 5 and 6 are compared in Table 16. Note that not every TDG attribute is directly comparable with an equivalent FDG attribute. It should be recalled that the TDG attributes were derived from an output survey of 390 Disney films, while the FDG attributes were compiled from audience perceptions of Disney films provided in a sample survey and focus groups.

The traditional TDG comprises films that are suitable for audiences of all ages, from children to adults, as exemplified by their G/U certificates. Films of the traditional TDG followed Walt Disney's early plan 'to appeal to children at the age when they want to think that they are grown up and to grownups who want to feel that they are children again' (Walt Disney in 1938, quoted in Korkis, 2016, p.86). Following Walt Disney's death in 1966 the WDC went through a period of trying to act as Walt Disney would have done, but this eventually led to an identity struggle in the 1980s with the production of several films aimed at more mature audiences that diverged from the TDG (see Gomery, 1994). As a consequence of this divergence from the 'profitable but limiting Disney label'

(Budd, 2005, p.10), these films (discussed in section 7.3) fared badly at the box office, but led Disney to create Touchstone and Hollywood Pictures to cater directly to older audiences, while Disney's core brand returned to the traditional TDG formula (although incorporating several more PG rated features), until evolving into the TDG 2.0 in the 21st century.

	Traditional TDG	TDG 2.0	FDG
Audience	Suitable for all ages	Generally suitable for all ages	Family Friendly
Medium	Live-action	Live-action	
			Animation
Generic Traits	Humour	Humour	Self-referential
	Fantasy	Fantasy	
	Adventure	Adventure	
			Musical
Representation	White lead characters	More Racially diverse characters	
	Male lead characters	Mixed gender lead characters	Conservative
	Heterosexual characters	Heterosexual characters	
Story	Original or adapted	Remake or franchise	
			Predictable
Other			Accessible
			Commercial
			High Production Values

Table 16: Comparing attributes of the traditional TDG, TDG 2.0 and FDG

The FDG considers Disney films to be family friendly, and thus appropriate for all age groups, although a negative perspective of the FDG would consider Disney films particularly skewed towards children, and thus less suitable for adults. In terms of audience, the FDG is less compatible with the TDG 2.0, which includes Disney's first PG-13/12A certificate films, and introduces mild swearing and fantasy violence into the Disney genre. Only a handful of respondents referred to such changes, including one who seemed to think that I was a representative of Disney and voiced the following plea:

> Please try to preserve the innocence of childhood by making
> more traditional non-violent/action films (F, 45+, British)

Generally, few respondents equated Disney films with either the Marvel and Star Wars franchises, or the contribution these studies have had on the shift to the TDG 2.0.

The most important difference between the TDG and the FDG, which should already have been made apparent, concerns the expected medium of Disney films. While the TDG dictates that Disney films are much more likely to be live-action productions, the FDG perception is that Disney films are predominantly animated, particularly rendered in the traditional 2D animation of the 20th century.

Audiences equate Disney films with the animated Classics they saw as children, when they often viewed the same film multiple times, interacted with toys and books based on the films, and were perhaps lucky enough to visit a theme park and see attractions based on their favourite animation. Even if a child watched live-action Disney films, available consumer products would be based on animated characters – *The Lion King* (1994b) could be re-enacted with numerous playsets, but there were no *Cool Runnings* (1993b) action figures. Audiences who are children today will likely have a different perception of Disney films as they grow into adulthood, having been exposed to Marvel and Star Wars films and merchandising as part of the Disney entertainment empire from childhood.

When asked in Question 8a why they enjoyed watching Disney films, only 15 respondents made explicit reference to humour, although over half of

those who said that they enjoyed Disney films more as an adult in answer to Question 9 referred to humour and jokes that were specifically targeted at adults. 61% of respondents associated Disney films with the comedy genre (Question 3) but, according to the output survey, only 46% of Disney films contain enough humour to be described as comedies. This mismatch could be accounted for by audiences thinking of the so-called hidden humour that they perceive to be embedded in animated Disney films and thus overestimating the comedic content of Disney films in general, just as they did with animation.

There is, however, a light comic touch found in many Disney films that would not necessarily be enough to label a film as a comedy. For example, *Bambi* (1942a) is referred to so often as a traumatic childhood experience that it has become a cliché, but the film still features gags involving Bambi trying to walk on ice, or Thumper being chastised by his mother. These elements of humour do not make the film a comedy, but they exemplify the lightness of touch found throughout Disney films that temper the more emotionally distressing moments. This lightness may be criticised as a way that Disney sanitises stories, but it is also arguably essential for keeping audiences of all ages engaged.

The musical genre is an expected part of the FDG, and Wasko's definition of 'Classic Disney' also noted that Disney films 'most often feature music' (2001c, p.115). The importance of songs and music to audience perceptions of Disney films once again comes from their understanding of Disney being represented by animated Classics, 65% of which can be described as musicals. Although it is true that every Disney film features a music score, the musical genre only makes up 17% of all Disney films considered in the output survey, a proportion that is too low for the attribute to be considered part of the TDG.

More prevalent film genres found in Disney films that thus form part of the TDG are fantasy and adventure, which are unrepresented explicitly in the FDG. Amy M. Davis' assertion that 'Disney animated films are perceived as fairy tales' (2013, p.7) does not match the FDG results from the current data, since respondents made negligible reference to fairy tales in their comments, however, her subsequent observation that 'one could certainly make the

argument […] that they *function* as fairy tales' (2013, p.7, italics in original) is perhaps corroborated by the prevalence of fantasy in the TDG.

The musical genre could be considered part of the light touch fantasy approach of Disney films, since musicals require a suspension of disbelief to accept, as do the escapist fantasy worlds that Disney films tend to depict. If audiences subscribe to a negative FDG perspective (-FDG), an expectation that Disney films will be musical may dissuade them from watching such films. Several respondents considered the particular style of Disney songs to be irritating and difficult to avoid – particularly in light of the success of *Frozen* (2013a) and the ubiquitous 'Let It Go'[136].

The FDG view of Disney films being conservative in terms of their treatment of minorities and women is fairly well matched by the traditional TDG, where Disney films favour white, heterosexual male leads. The TDG 2.0 challenges the FDG idea of Disney films' conservatism by attempting to promote multi-racial casting, better female representation and glimpses of LGBT+ visibility. But with the older, more conservative films still in circulation, the FDG is unlikely to adapt quickly to the modern liberal overtures of the TDG 2.0.

The traditional TDG indicates that Disney films were likely to be original or based on existing books and stories, while the TDG 2.0 has seen an increase in the number of remakes and franchises being produced. The FDG attribute of predictability either implies a positive attitude to familiar, comforting stories, or a negative attitude towards Disney's perceived lack of originality. Both FDG attitudes towards the predictable nature of Disney films match up with the attributes of the TDG 2.0 – remakes of existing Disney films can stir up nostalgic responses in audiences, or indicate a willingness to avoid risk. But if audiences' perceptions of the FDG are informed by their experience of animated Classics, they may consider the stories of heroes overcoming villains

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[136] 'Let It Go' sung by Idina Menzel reached #11 on the official UK singles chart, and stayed on the chart for 70 weeks, while the pop version sung by Demi Lovato spent 27 weeks in the UK chart, peaking at #42 (see http://www.officialcharts.com/search/singles/let%20it%20go/). As of 2nd August 2017, a sing-along version of the song posted by Disney UK on 30th Jan 2014 had accumulated 1,147,704,756 views: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0MK7qz13bU [Accessed: 2nd August 2017]. No other Disney songs have achieved such ubiquity, and that does not even factor in the countless other videos of children, men and women singing the song that have been uploaded to YouTube and other platforms.

and finding romance with comedy sidekicks to be one of the more predictable elements of Disney films.

Audiences expect high production values from Disney films, as well as plenty of merchandising to either enjoy or be appalled by. These attributes were not included in the data gathered from the output survey that informed the TDG. High production values are particularly important in terms of Disney's animated filmmaking, although there are instances where this was not the case, such as during WW2 when the loss of markets hit profits, and in the 1970s when some films featured animation recycled from earlier films. Disney has also had a reputation for pushing visual special effects in live-action films, from the kraken in *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954) to the motion capture CGI animals of *The Jungle Book* (2016f). The commercial side of Disney represented by merchandising and theme park spin-offs again relates back to a perception of Disney informed by animated Classics.

The FDG perception of Disney films being synonymous with animation colours every other FDG attribute, whether perceived positively or negatively. The expectation that Disney films are animated is fuelled by Disney's own emphasis on and promotion of their animated films through re-releases, merchandise, theme park attractions, sequels, remakes and spin-off television series, as well as Disney's reputation as a pioneer of animated entertainment that dates back to *Steamboat Willie* (1928). Adult audiences' relationships with Disney films is often informed by their relationships and experiences with these associated media, and their renegotiations are made manifest and visible in some of the ways that adults respond to Disney films. Adults use various tools, provided by Disney or generated by fans and antagonists, as a way of renegotiating their relationships with Disney films, and some of these tools will be considered in the next section.

7.3 Adult Responses to Disney Films

Participating in Disney fandom can be a passionate activity, requiring stamina, a healthy bank balance, and an ability to deflect cynicism. In the process of conducting my research I have come across many aspects of Disney fandom

that I had previously been unaware of, confirming that my level of fandom (despite turning my interest into a PhD) is much less intense than others. Whereas I am happy to watch Disney films, be a part of the D23 Disney Fan Club, and occasionally visit the theme parks, I have no interest in creating my own Disney-themed art, participating in fan site discussions or engaging in character cosplay. However, there are plenty of fans, consumers, and even antagonists who engage with and respond to Disney films in such ways.

In Question 7 of the sample survey I asked respondents about a number of Disney film related activities in which they may have participated. 41% of respondents who professed to enjoy Disney films had completed an online quiz about Disney films (compared to 6% of those who do not enjoy Disney films) and just 11% had created or shared fan fiction, cartoons or artwork related to Disney films. Although Mickey Mouse Club fan clubs, organised by local cinemas, date back to 1929 (Smith, 2016, p.494), the internet has provided opportunities for adults to respond to and share their interest in Disney films with more people and in more ways than ever before. Some of the positive effects of such fandom were suggested by the following respondent:

> I've been able to make many friends, both locally and from around the world, through Disney fandom. A majority of these friends are female, between ages 22 and 36, and some are married and with children. I've noticed when we get going about aspects of fandom (the characters, storyline, themes, etc.) we almost seem like children again. (F, 25-34, American)

Adult responses to Disney can be as simple as buying a cinema ticket or purchasing a DVD. But just as children find creative ways to express their interest in Disney films through play outside of watching the films themselves, there are many outlets for adult audiences to respond to Disney films. These responses can involve consumption of Disney produced media relating to Disney films, or consumption and/or creation of media by audiences themselves, and these responses contribute towards renegotiations of relationships with Disney films.

Adult responses in the current context include those that are only (theoretically) available to or conducted out of the reach of children, either financially, socially, or due to their explicit nature. Adult responses may

therefore be: explicit, in terms of sexuality, violence or language; expensive, in terms of merchandise or experiences; or exclusive, in that children are simply not permitted to be involved; or they may be a combination of these responses, which will be explored separately in the following sub-sections.

Although discussion of merchandise and the wider Disney entertainment offering may seem to be moving away from the Disney films prioritised in this research, Disney's synergistic approach means that these different media are almost intrinsically interlinked. For example, Lorraine Santoli, former Director of Corporate Synergy (1978-2000), stressed the links that the Disney film division had with other parts of the WDC:

> …if there was a major animated film coming out we really got together probably 18 months to 2 years in advance in meeting with all the different Disney divisions […] if you wanted there to be a parade that opened the day and date with the film you had to plan well in advance, as well as obviously consumer products really had to plan far in advance, so the film division and the theme parks are very much connected and intertwined (interviewed 15th July 2016).

Thus, an audience's first encounter with a particular Disney film may be through a theme park attraction, promotional giveaways, or hearing a song on the radio rather than seeing the film, or a trailer or poster for it, directly. The ways in which adult audiences interact with these film-related ephemera have an important part to play in forming the FDG as well as being involved in the renegotiation of relationships with Disney films.

7.3.1 Explicit Adult Responses

Although explicit adult responses are most often found online, artists and satirists have used Disney characters as inspiration for subversive responses for many decades. One of the most infamous examples, published in *The Realist* magazine in 1967, was artist Wally Wood's *Disneyland Memorial Orgy Poster*, which depicted 'Mickey shooting up, Goofy screwing Minnie, [and] the

Seven Dwarfs having their way with Snow White' (Levin, 2003, p.79)[137]. A colourised version of the image subsequently became popular as a poster in student accommodation, which resulted in Disney's lawyers forcing the poster's publisher out of business.

Animation is a key component of the FDG and continues to provide inspiration for many professional and amateur artists who use the internet to share their work with wider audiences. Today many budding Disney artists showcase their work via DeviantArt, 'the largest online social network for artists and art enthusiasts […] to exhibit, promote, and share their works with an enthusiastic, art-centric community' (DeviantArt, 2017). A search for 'Disney' on DeviantArt returns over 1.5 million results, featuring many variations of Disney digital recreations, sketches, and collages. Not all artwork posted to the site could be deemed explicit, but that which is often has a serious purpose beyond simple titillation.

The Huffington Post has interviewed several artists who have repurposed Disney characters, noting that 'Disney has always been a popular target for individuals and artists who want to push the boundaries of identity and what is considered "normal" in society' (Nichols, 2016b). Disney is a particularly popular target for these purposes as it is considered to be so conservative, with few minority voices present in their films. Artist TT Bret specialises in 'genderbent' Disney characters, drawing female (animated) characters as male and vice versa[138]. TT Bret has observed how he 'produced the first images purely for fun. I love Disney, art design and designing characters [and the] response I got from the human rights/political side of Tumblr took me by surprise' (in Nichols, 2016b). The artist went on to acknowledge that 'the images of normalcy and beauty that the media portrays are very limited, as well [as] the ideals of gender and sexuality' (Nichols, 2016b) and sees the pushing of artistic boundaries with Disney characters as a way of challenging representations of 'normality', particularly since Disney has only very recently begun to address these issues themselves.

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[137] The poster can be found here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Disneyland_Memorial_Orgy.gif [Accessed: 10th July 2017].

[138] Examples of TT Bret's Genderbent Disney work can be found here: http://lettherebedoodles.tumblr.com/tagged/genderbent-disney [Accessed: 2nd June 2017].

Artist YANN'X's work is even more sexually explicit and defiantly queer[139]. In an interview with *The Huffington Post*, YANN'X acknowledges that 'naked Disney characters are nothing new […] Disney characters are icons of our collective memory, so tapping that source is like using a universal language – it's a way to make sure everyone will get my message' (in Nichols, 2016a). Animated Disney characters can therefore be used as shorthand by artists who want to draw attention to both their work and the problems perceived to be inherent in Disney representations. By producing images where Aladdin and Hercules shower naked together or where two Disney princes cuddle while Sleeping Beauty sleeps, YANN'X aims to convey a message 'that homosexuality is nothing to be afraid or ashamed of' (in Nichols, 2016a). The nudity and shock value of seeing familiar Disney characters in compromising poses ensures that the images are circulated on social media and linger in the mind.

In an interview with Sam Stryker, Senior Editor at BuzzFeed and author of many posts relating to Disney, he confirmed that:

> Disney content is a core part of our brand identity (right along with cats, dogs, food, the Kardashians, and other topics associated with BuzzFeed) and several of the company's biggest hits are Disney-centered […] I think this speaks to our audience's familiarity with these subjects […] and is also drawn to the magic that is Disney (interviewed 16th June 2016)

BuzzFeed, Cosmopolitan and other entertainment websites exploit the familiarity and nostalgia of Disney films and characters as 'clickbait' to drive traffic to their sites through articles with provocative titles and content such as those listed in Table 17.

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[139] Examples of YANN'X's work can be found here: http://yann-x.deviantart.com/ [Accessed: 2nd June 2017].

Date Posted	Article & Source
29/10/14	**If Disney Princesses Had Realistic Waistlines** https://www.buzzfeed.com/lorynbrantz/if-disney-princesses-had-realistic-waistlines?utm_term=.fuPDL9aVGK#.ivelr8bXp1
13/01/15	**27 Times Disney Princesses Perfectly Summed Up Your Night Out** https://www.buzzfeed.com/christianzamora/times-disney-princesses-perfectly-summed-up-out-your-nigh?utm_term=.jd4qZRXAg0#.ludqa15PzW
26/01/15	**If Disney Princesses Had Realistic Hair** https://www.buzzfeed.com/lorynbrantz/if-disney-princesses-had-realistic-hair?utm_term=.ukvOz3oJax#.kfRoG3PME0
11/02/15	**If Disney Couples Starred in "Fifty Shades of Grey"** http://www.cosmopolitan.com/entertainment/movies/news/a36375/if-disney-couples-starred-in-fifty-shades-of-grey/
07/05/15	**If Disney Princesses Took Kim Kardashian's Selfies** http://www.cosmopolitan.com/entertainment/celebs/news/a40135/if-disney-princesses-took-kim-kardashian-selfies/
30/07/15	**So this is what Disney Princes would look like in real life** https://www.buzzfeed.com/samstryker/when-you-wish-upon-a-hunk?utm_term=.wgzYAaNWMb#.hkJQEJwNZo
14/08/15	**We Gave Grindr Profiles To Disney Princes & Here's What Happened** https://www.buzzfeed.com/chrishernandez/if-disney-princes-had-classic-grindr-profiles?bffbgeeky&utm_term=.iaG3GyzvJ4#.jhQwpNLqjr
07/01/16	**You Need To See This Insanely Sexy Cartoon Lion** https://www.buzzfeed.com/kaelintully/kovu-is-hot-but-the-ginger-prince-bobby-flay-has-my-heart?utm_term=.wiQdALzByq#.tm5a1PjoxB
31/05/16	**Aladdin's Dad Is The Hottest Disney DILF Of All Time** https://www.buzzfeed.com/christianzamora/aladdins-dad-is-the-hottest-disney-dilf-of-all-time?utm_term=.flyKBq4wQn#.tx5re24VMk
01/07/16	**12 Disney Princes Who Fell In Love With Each Other** http://www.cosmopolitan.com/entertainment/movies/news/a60819/disney-princes-gay-couples-in-love/

Table 17: Examples of online Disney memes

Source: Compiled by author [All sites accessed: 2nd June 2017].

Disney memes frequently circulate via social media and thus bring thousands if not millions of hits to each website[140], and with this web traffic come audiences for the advertisers who fund such sites. Although Disney themselves were not involved in the production of the memes listed above, Stryker confirmed that Disney have collaborated with BuzzFeed on content related to Disney theme parks in the past. There is also an official Disney blog, Oh My Disney (https://ohmy.disney.com/), which publishes more family-friendly memes, quizzes, and content mostly derived from animated Disney films. Such posts are not explicit, nor do they challenge Disney's conservative values.

Stryker, who also professes to '*love* Disney', ascribes the popularity of Disney memes circulated by BuzzFeed and others to nostalgia, familiarity and 'their aspirational quality (i.e., don't we all want to be a Disney princess, marry a Disney prince, etc.)'. He also notes that, although the 'Disney audience is near-universal […] I would say I'm really trying to reach gay men and straight women in their 20s/30s' – the latter describes a large majority of my sample survey respondents. Although the aspirational quality of Disney films was not directly cited by survey respondents, audiences could be described as aspiring to feelings of comfort, escape, and nostalgia, rather than aspiring to be Disney princesses or to be with a Disney prince.

Disney memes predominantly revolve around animation, particularly Disney princesses; Cinderella, Jasmine, and Snow White are depicted with fuller figures, 'realistic' body hair and engaging in sexual fantasies that challenge unachievable Disney ideals. There is shock value in such images, but there are also serious points to be made about representation in mainstream cinema. An audience member who encounters such memes may have their opinion of Disney films altered, resulting in a renegotiation of their relationship that leads to a disassociation with Disney output.

Stryker believes that animated Disney princes and princesses are particularly popular because:

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[140] Since I first compiled this list of memes in mid-2016, BuzzFeed has stopped publishing the number of hits for each of its web pages. I do recall that some of the most popular pages listed in the table had upwards of 1 million page views, demonstrating their popularity.

> …although they're cartoons, they're actually people. It's easier to see yourself in Ariel or Jasmine, or want to date Eric or Aladdin, than it is with Mickey or Minnie. So not only is the nostalgia factor in play, but there's a sort of association with these characters that they have real human traits and qualities that makes them almost like celebrities (interviewed 16th June 2016).

In this view, Disney characters become public figures who can be discussed, mocked and turned into viral memes just like Kim Kardashian, Beyoncé or Donald Trump. Thus Disney films and their animated royalty provide a common reference point, but also provide a platform for commenting on real issues, such as how the media portrays real people.

The problem with the popularity of princess memes from the point of view of Disney genres is that the more variations of images that are created and circulated, the more the FDG becomes synonymous with animated princesses. This is excellent news for the Disney Princess brand, but by promoting these characters, who are considered even by many Disney fans to be too thin/hairless/sexless and thus worthy of images addressing these problems, the perception of *all* Disney films as being sexist and problematic proliferates.

The frequent identification of Disney with princesses and animation reinforces the idea that older Disney animated films, which may well be troubled by representational issues, are too compromised for discerning adult audiences to enjoy, threatening to render mute Disney's attempts to modernise. While Disney tries to push forward with the less-conservative TDG 2.0, the traditional TDG lives on in parallel through explicit memes that prioritise problematic princesses and provide additional ammunition to the perceptions of those audiences who believe in the –FDG.

7.3.2 Exclusive Adult Responses

While children are able dress up as Disney princesses and Marvel superheroes when they visit Disney theme parks, only adults can engage in 'Disney Bounding'. According to the online Urban Dictionary, at Disney theme parks 'you're not allowed to go in fancy dress if you're over a certain age. Older

Disney fans get around this by dressing as the characters in a more subtle way. This is known as Disney Bounding' (Pocketsizedwolf, 2015)[141]. The theme parks seem to be reinforcing an association between children and Disney by banning adults dressing up[142]. The only way for adults to legitimately wear Disney costumes at the parks is to attend one of the annual Halloween parties, which take place after regular opening hours and carry an additional cost.

While Disney Bounding is one of the more niche ways in which Disney fans adapt their interest in Disney to fit an adult world, simply wearing clothing featuring Disney imagery allows fans to wear their interest on their sleeve. Mickey Mouse can be seen on t-shirts, watches and trainers sported by all sizes, ages and cultures, although it is questionable how many have ever seen Mickey's shorts and feature film appearances. It can be difficult to find Disney imagery on clothing for adults that looks beyond Mickey, especially on the high street. It is even harder for male adult fans to find Disney character branded clothing. For example, a search for the term 'Disney' at online retailer EMP provides 510 items for women and just 43 for men[143]. It is also harder for adults to find Disney clothing if you live in the UK, as evidenced by the 12 items for adults available from the online British Disney Store, compared to the 473 men's and 578 women's items on sale through the US Disney Store[144].

Another exclusively adult response to Disney films is to have Disney characters tattooed permanently on your body – Janet Wasko uses an image of a man with 1,000 Disney tattoos to illustrate the term 'Disney fanatic' (2001c, p.197). Less permanent ways of engaging with Disney films include Disney themed weddings, or even getting married at one of the theme parks (this is of course an extremely expensive response). The latter is one of the few ways that adults can exclusively respond to their interest in Disney films in a Disney-sanctioned manner, as Disney is not often in the business of restricting its

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[141] Since Disney Bounding is not a Disney-sanctioned activity, there are variations on the spelling, with Disneybounding being common. However, the Urban Dictionary definition of 'Disneybounding' relates to an even more adult activity: 'The act of dressing up as a Disney Princess (i.e. Cosplay), and being bound for the purposes of sexual fantasy fulfillment [sic]' (Khemeher, 2014).

[142] Having adults in fancy dress could cause confusion since Disney cast members (employees) dress as Disney characters in parades and other attractions.

[143] www.emp.co.uk EMP specialises in cult entertainment merchandise, as well as 'alternative' clothing, for rock and Goth fans. Search for 'Disney' conducted on 2nd June 2017.

[144] Items listed on www.disneystore.co.uk and www.disneystore.com on 2nd June 2017.

media and experiences to adult audiences. Adult-only Disney activities can be found at the theme parks: for example, the Walt Disney World Resort offers a Backstage Magic tour that is only open to guests aged 12 and over. Other parks tours increase the age restriction to 16 and above[145]. These restrictions are due to both the safety of guests and in order to maintain the 'Disney magic' for children by not allowing them to see how it is created.

Such exclusive adult responses are mainly practiced by Disney fans and fanatics as they require financial commitment as well as a deeper interest in Disney history and ephemera. Being able to tour the Disney parks backstage unencumbered with children is a privilege for those who can afford it. Wearing Disney-emblazoned clothing and tattoos are more public ways of announcing your Disney fandom. These responses to Disney are not necessarily tied up with enjoyment of Disney films since familiarity with the films is not a prerequisite for visiting the parks or sporting a Mickey wristwatch; they represent a deeper level of engagement and commitment to the Disney aesthetic. In terms of renegotiated relationships, adulthood allows fans a greater immersion in the history and world of Disney than the restrictions of childhood might allow – learning how the Disney magic is created offers a fresh perspective on the films and can reveal new pleasures.

7.3.3 Expensive Adult Responses

As many of the sample survey's respondents pointed out, Disney's cinematic releases spawn a large array of merchandise. Much of the officially licensed Disney merchandise takes the form of action figures, dolls, and activity books for children. But Disney is also aware that a significant number of adult Disney fans and consumers can be exploited for further profit. Lorraine Santoli, Disney's former Director of Corporate Synergy, confirmed that Disney included adult audiences in their promotional activities:

> …we did everything in our power to capture and did promotions
> and so forth that were targeted to adults, maybe there were

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[145] Backstage tours and special events at Walt Disney World can be found here: https://disneyworld.disney.go.com/events-tours/ [Accessed: 2nd June 2017].

radio promotions on more adult stations, or there were TV ads
or magazine ads that ran in more adult publications, I'm sure
that was always part of the mix (interviewed 15th July 2016.

As well as seeking adult audiences for their films, Disney provides
various consumer products for audiences to experience the film beyond the
cinema, thus being an adult Disney fan can become an expensive pastime. For
some fans, Disney films are secondary to Disney's other activities:

My experience of Disney is very much shaped by Disney as a
brand. The films are only one part of being a Disney fan and
other things are maybe more important, such as cosplay,
merchandise and the parks which I have visited/plan to visit. (F,
25-34, British)

The sources of this cosplay, merchandise and theme park attractions are of
course Disney's films, particularly from the animated Classics line.

The UK's Disney Stores are packed full of gifts and clothing with children
in mind, but contain very little for the adult consumer and fan. Shops at the
Disney theme parks cater to adult Disney fans much more readily, but that
option is not convenient for those who do not live near a park. With adult Disney
products less visible on the High Street in the UK, Disney becomes the
preserve of either children or those committed enough to hunt products down
online, often paying a premium to have them imported from places like Japan,
which has a different cultural approach to animation and associated
merchandise.

Consumer products that are more closely related to the Disney films
themselves include soundtrack albums, DVDs, Blu-rays and books about their
production. Another way of finding out more about Disney films and the wider
world of the WDC is to become a member of D23: The Official Disney Fan Club,
which launched in 2009 as 'the company's first major foray into providing an
official organization for Disney fans' (Smith, 2016, p.167). Individual Gold
membership of D23, which includes four issues of Disney twenty-three quarterly
magazine and an exclusive member's gift, costs $79.99 (plus significant extra
postage for those joining outside the US) so it is not for children or casual

fans[146]. Similarly, the Disney Music Emporium online store lists the limited edition *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs Master Score Book* for a hefty $300.00[147]. If you really want to see the entire score of the film presented in full, you have to pay a princely sum (and live in the US) to do so.

While Disney's child consumers have access to a wide range of activity, story and sticker books featuring Disney's animated characters, Disney publishes several books each year for adult consumers about the production and history of Disney films, both modern and classic, through its own Disney Editions (and Marvel) publisher, as well as several other licensed publishers. One of the biggest sources of books about Disney (unsanctioned by the WDC) is the American publisher Theme Park Press, which was founded in 2012. Owner of Theme Park Press, Bob McLain, told me that the audience for his company's books is:

> …overwhelmingly an adult audience, with perhaps 20% of that audience self-described "scholars" who enjoy reading about Walt, the Disney company, the production of Disney films and the construction of Disney theme parks, and so forth. The other 80% are casual fans interested in less "heavy" Disney lore and prospective theme park visitors who pick up one of my planning titles to help them with their trip (interviewed 26th July 2016).

McLain ascribes the recent explosion in Disney publishing to both his own identification of a market niche that was 'not being sufficiently served by websites or by the books published by Disney itself' and to the availability of self-published digital books. Although Theme Park Press publishes seven or eight new Disney titles each month, McLain notes that around 10% of his books bring in 90% of his income because many of the titles are so niche, and even the most dedicated Disney fans do not have 'unlimited discretionary income' – a fact that Disney themselves do not seem to comprehend.

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[146] Further information about D23 membership can be found here: https://d23.com/membership-information/ [Accessed: 11th July 2017].

[147] Listing for the book can be found here: http://disneymusic.shop.musictoday.com/product/XVAM001/snow-white-and-the-seven-dwarfs-master-score-book?cp=81712_82104_82051 [Accessed: 11th July 2017].

When asked why he believed that Disney films and their attendant merchandise prove to be so popular with adult audiences, McLain, who also admitted that he is not actually a fan of Disney films, replied:

> …Disney has become associated with the clean, happy, enthusiastic vision of the world that parents want to impress upon their children. It's a bulwark against the seedy and the scandalous. For that reason, they often can't let go of it themselves, and so whether they identify themselves as such or not, they become Disney "fans", consuming Disney movies, traveling to Disney theme parks, and buying Disney merchandise (interviewed 26th July 2016).

The observation that adults might become Disney fans without realising or self-identifying as fans is a persuasive one and points to an unconscious act of renegotiation between audiences and Disney films. It also lends credence to the idea that Wasko's use of audience archetype labels such as 'fan' and 'fanatic' are more likely to be used (pejoratively) by third parties rather than audience members identifying with such labels. McLain characterises adult Disney fandom as an unconscious retreat from the ills of the 'real' world into a place of safety and comfort. This view accords with many of the comments made by respondents in the sample survey, who suggested, whether directly or by implication, that they seek comfort in Disney films.

Adulthood generally brings with it financial independence and the opportunity for new educational experiences that allows for a greater chance to engage with, and consume, Disney films and their associated merchandise. Finding out more about the production and history of Disney films through engagement with academic and non-academic texts will contribute to ongoing renegotiations of adult relationships with Disney films, for better or worse. The more that is learned about the WDC and its films may turn a childhood fan into an adult resister, or the opportunities to buy into the Disney genre through engagement with adult-oriented materials may inadvertently turn a Disney film cynic into an unwitting fan.

There are many available outlets for adult audiences to make their feelings about Disney films known, as well as to change perceptions and enhance knowledge. Such outlets, whether Disney-sanctioned or otherwise,

help to shape the FDG and thus adult relationships with Disney films. In the next section I will consider the relationship from the other direction, in the ways that Disney films have responded to adult audiences, or how the TDG of Disney's output has been informed by the FDG perceived by audiences.

7.4 Disney Film Responses to Adult Audiences

When Disney was producing animated Mickey Mouse and Silly Symphonies short subjects in the 1930s, they did not restrict promotional efforts to young children. Articles appeared in local and national newspapers that fleshed out 'the cartoon characters as "actors" and "celebrities" – right down to special "interviews" designed for newspapers. Authorised by Disney, but written with an adult audience firmly in mind, the resulting pieces featured Tinseltown scandal like few funny animals have ever seen' (Gerstein, 2011, p.252). Articles about Walt Disney and his films in magazines such as Time, National Geographic and Good Housekeeping also clearly had adult audiences in mind, although the films themselves were pitched at all ages.

Having spent several decades claiming to produce films and short subjects for all ages, in 1955 television series *The Mickey Mouse Club* (1955-1959) became the 'first entertainment that Walt Disney had ever designed expressly for children' (Thomas, 1994, p.274). However, it would take several more decades before the WDC began to produce entertainment that was expressly targeted at adult audiences.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s Disney underwent an identity crisis and sought to break out of the perceived restrictions that being seen as a children's film studio created, as Lorraine Santoli, Disney's former Director of Corporate Synergy, observed:

> …back when I was working there [1978-2000] […] for many years there was always the struggle with 'how do we capture adult audiences?' […] So it was always, not a struggle, but difficult for them to come to how they were going to capture an adult audience (interviewed 15th July 2016).

Several films released in the early 1980s demonstrate Disney's attempts to reach older audiences: *Tex* (1982d) represented 'an experiment […] to reach a new generation of teenagers who often abandoned Disney films for more "realistic" live-action fare' (Smith, 2016, p.744); *Midnight Madness* (1980a) was 'released without the Disney name on it, with the hope that it would reach teenagers and young adults who often shied away from "Disney" films' (Smith, 2016, p.503); *Trenchcoat* (1983c) repeated this stunt; and both *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1983b) and *Night Crossing* (1982c) restricted any reference to Disney to the small print of their posters.

None of these films earned more than $10 million at the US box office, which compares unfavourably with the $63.4 million US gross of animated Classic *The Fox and the Hound* (1981c). It might therefore be surprising that Disney continued to pursue an older demographic, creating Touchstone Pictures, a whole new label 'for films that had more mature themes than the standard "Disney" film' (Smith, 2016, p.767) that could be dedicated to older audiences, separate from the standard Disney film output. Counter-intuitively, upon the release of the first Touchstone production, *Splash* (1984b), 'Disney ran a full-page newspaper advertisement describing its new Touchstone label and appearing to dissociate the parent company from the movie's more risqué moments' (Taylor, 1987). Disney thus tried to both announce their ownership of Touchstone, while trying to distance it from the Disney name.

Keeping Touchstone at arm's length seemed to work, however, since few respondents referred to Touchstone when questioned about Disney studios in the sample survey (see section 7.2.1). Lorraine Santoli explained the decision to separate the two brands:

> …there was lots of discussion over we want to expand our audience but we also don't want to damage the audience that we have. And I think the way they decided to do that was to create a separate brand, so Disney would always remain Disney […] so that's how they came up with Touchstone and hoped to keep the two separate, and that the audience would accept these films from Touchstone as being not necessarily synonymous with Disney (interviewed 15th July 2016).

The Disney name did not appear on any of the Touchstone releases, and distribution was handled by Buena Vista Pictures.

Building on the success of Touchstone, in 1989 Disney created Hollywood Pictures to produce 'fare that was of more adult interest than the usual Disney film' (Smith, 2016, p.362), and later purchased Miramax Films, which also released 'exploitation/genre' (King, 2007, p.55) films under the Dimension Films label. The adult-appropriate nature of the films released by these studios can be seen in Figure 33, which illustrates the percentages of each studio's output that were awarded G, PG, PG-13 and R certificates. No film released by any WDS subsidiary has ever carried the NC-17 certificate, prohibiting exhibition to children under 17.
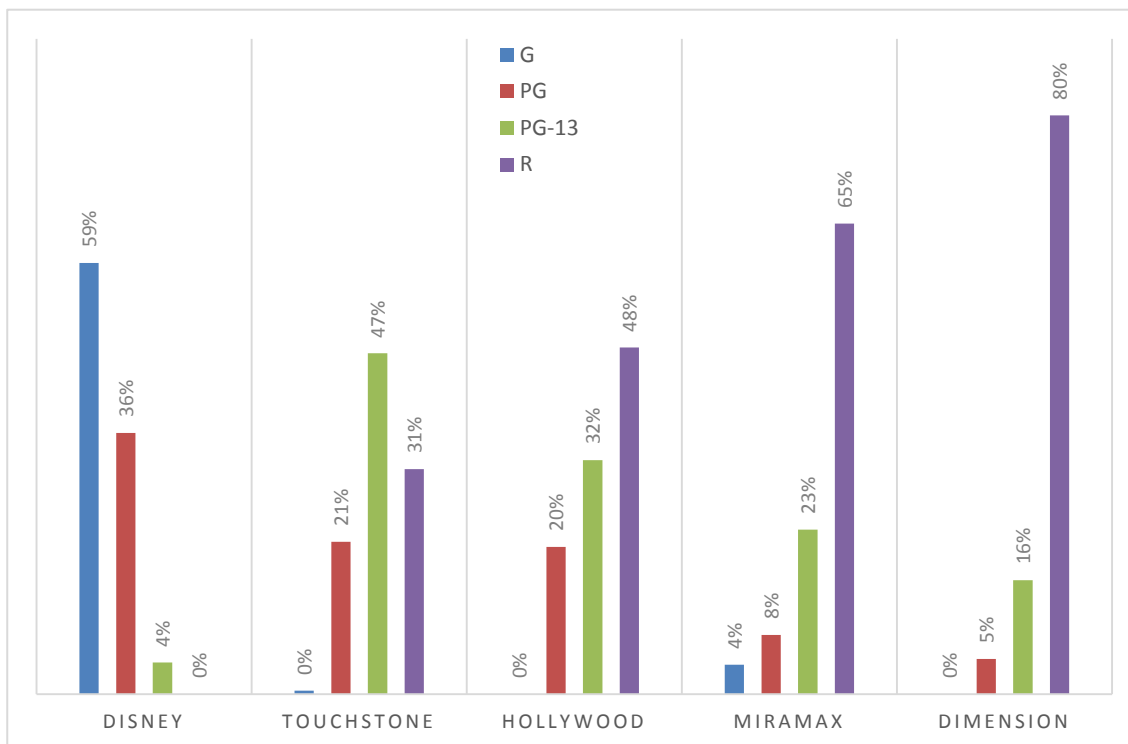
Figure 33: Disney studio film certificates as percentage of studio output

Source: Output survey (Disney) and author's preliminary research (other studios)[148].

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[148] The data for Touchstone, Hollywood, Miramax and Dimension are based on preliminary research carried out prior to the present project and have not been subject to the same rigorous output survey review as the Disney data, so the figures are illustrative rather than definitive.

Deliberately confining Disney's adult-oriented films to new studios may have inadvertently encouraged the perception that Disney did not make films for adults. With notable exceptions[149], Touchstone and Hollywood Pictures films have not achieved the same box office successes as the most popular Disney films, nor have they leant themselves to synergistic cross-overs with other parts of the Disney entertainment complex, such as theme parks and consumer products. Similarly, Miramax Films, primarily overseen by the Weinstein brothers and releasing international and independent films, often scored critical successes, if not box office blockbusters.

Considering the relationship between Touchstone and Disney films highlights the importance of consumer products and film spin-offs in attracting and maintaining audience attention. Without such ephemera films more easily fade from collective memory once their theatrical release ends, thus contributing little to the FDG. The films that this applies to include many live-action Disney films and almost all Touchstone and Hollywood releases. Conversely, animated Disney Classics are re-released, remade and repackaged, enjoying a continued presence as part of the Disney brand and thus as a dominant part of the FDG.

As WDS has acquired new studios it has retired or sold off its adult-focused studios and, through the TDG 2.0, has begun to produce films that skew a little older than before, resulting in more PG and PG-13 certifications, as shown in Figure 34. This data illustrates Disney's identity struggle in the early 1980s as well as the increase in PG and PG-13 certified films following the acquisitions of Marvel and Lucasfilm in the 21st century.

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[149] *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988b) and *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993e) were both originally (part) animated features produced by Touchstone Pictures, but subsequent home media releases have carried Disney branding. The former film also has a presence at Disneyland and Tokyo Disneyland with the attraction Roger Rabbit's Car Toon Spin, while the latter has spawned a plethora of merchandise carrying the Disney brand, much of it targeting adult consumers.
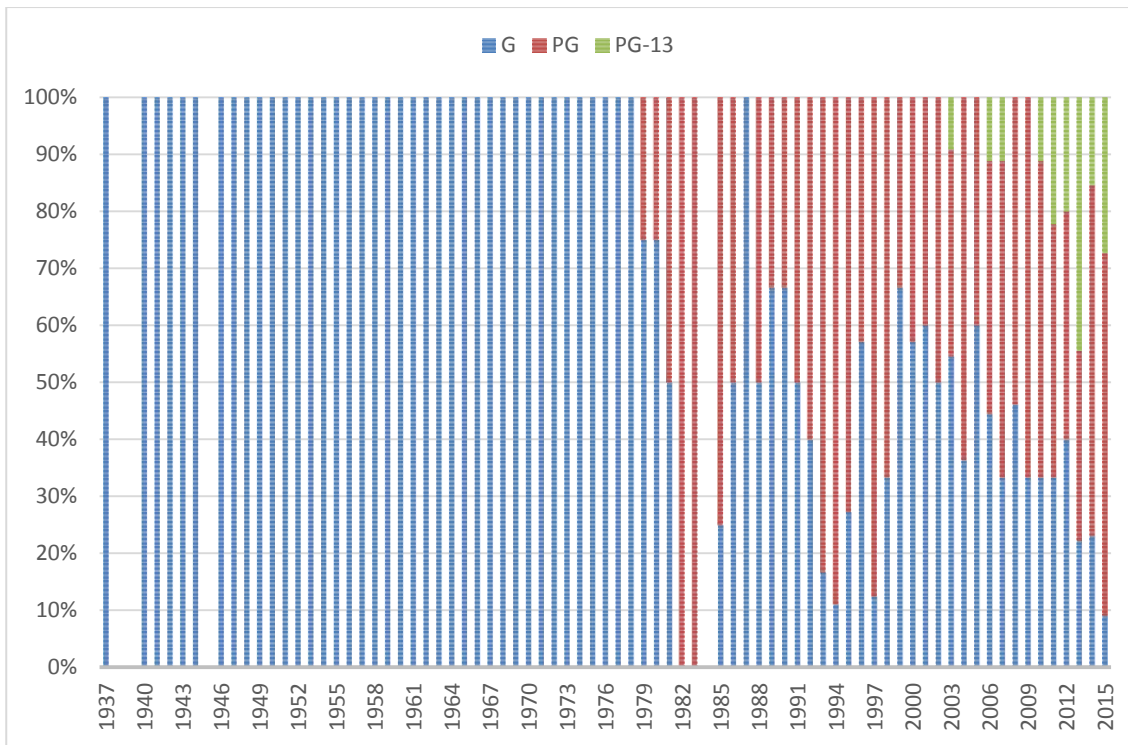
Figure 34: Disney film certificates as percentage of annual output

Source: Author's analysis of film output data.

While Pixar, Marvel and Star Wars films carry their own distinct brand identities, they have also been integrated into the Disney entertainment synergy machine unlike Disney's older adult studios. Disney also produces consumer products and spin-offs that appeal to adult audiences separately from younger audiences without compromising the core Disney values found in the TDG of reaching a wider audience, even though the TDG 2.0 seems to skew slightly older.

Perhaps reflecting the fact that modern Hollywood box office successes tend to be films that are suitable for the whole family – animations (DreamWorks, Illumination, or Aardman), comic book films (Marvel and DC Extended Universe) and adaptations of young adult literature (Harry Potter, Twilight and The Hunger Games franchises) in particular – after three decades of experimentation with adult-oriented studios modern Disney has refocused its entire Studio Entertainment business segment on a return to the 'family film' market. Disney has successfully absorbed popular franchises and studios to

dominate global box offices, something that would not have been possible with the R rated films released by its older adult-focused studios.

	Film	US Gross	Worldwide Gross	Studio
1	Rogue One: A Star Wars Story	$532,177,324	$1,056,057,273	Disney: Lucasfilm
2	Finding Dory	$486,295,561	$1,028,570,889	Disney: Pixar
3	Captain America: Civil War	$408,084,349	$1,153,304,495	Disney: Marvel
4	The Secret Life of Pets	$368,384,330	$875,457,937	Universal Pictures
5	The Jungle Book	$364,001,123	$966,550,600	Disney: Live-action
6	Deadpool	$363,070,709	$783,112,979	20th Century Fox
7	Zootopia	$341,268,248	$1,023,784,195	Disney: Animation

Table 18: Top seven films at 2016 US box office

Source: Data taken from Box Office Mojo[150].

The success of Disney's acquisition strategy and return to family-focused filmmaking is illustrated in Table 18, which shows that by the end of 2016, five of the seven top grossing films at the US box office had been released by Disney, each by a distinct Disney studio[151]. The box office impact of Disney's genre adaptation, moving from the traditional TDG to the TDG 2.0, is just one consequence of an appeal to a slightly older audience base. Disney's attempts to modernise have had a positive impact on their profit margins, changed the TDG, but made little impression on the FDG. A real-world case study of my own

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[150] http://www.boxofficemojo.com/yearly/chart/?yr=2016&p=.htm [Accessed: 9th August 2017].
[151] The two films in the top seven not released by Disney include a Universal Pictures TDG 2.0-like family-oriented animation, and another Marvel comic adaptation, albeit an R rated one, and neither film grossed as much as the five Disney films worldwide.

ethnographic experiences of the TDG and FDG will be explored in the next section.

7.5 A Personal Case Study: Renegotiating Relationships

Building on the ethnographic discussion in section 6.2, in this section I apply the findings of the research to my own experiences with the aim of illustrating how adults renegotiate their relationships with Disney films.

As an academic and an adult fan of Disney I have responded to Disney films by making them the subject of my research. The origin of the research was my frustration with how misinformed many people seem to be about Disney films and how they are taken for granted. For example, on learning that I had been watching DVD documentaries about how animated Disney films were made, a friend once asked how much could be said about making cartoons, unaware of the extensive research, preparation and artistic skill that goes into Disney's animated filmmaking. Elsewhere, when talking to a new hairdresser about my Disney research, she volunteered that *Shrek* (2001b) was her favourite. *Shrek* was produced by DreamWorks Animation as an antidote to Disney animation, or at least to the FDG.

I have found that researching Disney films for a PhD is a subject that encourages people to open up and provide me with their opinion on the subject in ways that friends studying quantum mechanics are not privy to. It has not been my purpose to educate audiences about Disney films or to champion Disney films above all others, but to try and understand different perceptions of Disney, and the consequences of any misperceptions. However, as part of my own relationship renegotiation with Disney films, I sometimes find myself inadvertently defending them from critics.

In the process of data analysis I have read hundreds of positive and negative opinions about Disney films and this has been an eye-opening experience, and it has also led me to question the pleasures that I derive from such films. Are the films intrinsically bad because they are so conservative, and am I wrong for enjoying them? I can understand negative attitudes to Disney

films, but also recognise that oftentimes these attitudes are driven by external factors, or by an understanding of the FDG that does not match reality. I also understand that Disney films, as any other entertainment, can be pleasurable in spite of problematic content, either tangible or fantasy.

On holiday in Walt Disney World in 2014, my husband and I enjoyed a Backstage Magic tour where we saw behind the scenes of the parks. Seeing guest members playing Snow White and Cinderella chatting together while dressed in robes as they walked through the 'Utilidors', the tunnels beneath the Magic Kingdom, was startling, but did not ruin the 'Disney magic'. On the contrary, finding out more about how Disney films and parks are made only increases my interest in the finished products.

During another holiday, in Japan in 2016, I discovered that Disney characters regularly appeared among a multitude of merchandise featuring Japanese video game and manga characters. The Japanese clothing store UNIQLO also stocked a wide variety of Disney t-shirt designs for men and women. Even though I did not have time to visit Tokyo Disneyland or DisneySea, I still managed to fill my luggage with Disney merchandise that was unavailable outside Japan. Japanese relationships with animation (and anime) seem to be culturally very different from those in the US and UK, illustrating how relationships with Disney films are influenced by cultural factors.

I did not grow up believing Disney films were just for children, they were merely another entertainment option, an opinion that I still subscribe to. As I have learned more about the Walt Disney Company, and explored differing adult perceptions of Disney films through this research, I have had to consciously renegotiate my relationships to the films, while trying to maintain a neutral stance as a researcher. Being a researcher and a fan are not incompatible positions, but they involve 'negotiating and re-negotiating boundaries [in the move] between fan spaces and the "legitimate" status of researcher' (Zubernis and Larsen, 2013, p.229), reflecting the tensions between the TDG and FDG and subsequent renegotiations between audiences and Disney films.

Disney's rich, well-documented and self-publicised history has been complemented by its acquisitions of Marvel and Lucasfilm, which have long and fascinating histories of their own. My perception of what a Disney film is has been expanded by Disney's modern day TDG 2.0 filmmaking practices, but my expectations have not changed – I expect quality from modern Disney films, whichever subsidiary studio they have come from, but I am also prepared to be disappointed, aware that Disney does not always get it right. I take comfort in knowing that although the story may take some dark turns, it will inevitably offer pleasures and comforts that cannot be guaranteed from the output of other Hollywood film studios.

Discovering previously unseen films from Disney's back catalogue – I have watched all 38 Disney films from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937c) to *White Wilderness* (1958d) so far in a chronological trawl through the Disney filmography – invites new perspectives on the genre, each new film challenging my own preconceived notions of what a Disney film is. My research interest in Disney aligns my own personal perception of the FDG more closely with the TDG, but that does not mean that my relationship with Disney films is fixed, and it will no doubt continue to go through a process of renegotiation every time I slip a DVD into the player, buy a cinema ticket for a new Disney release, or read another book about Disney.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has considered how adult audiences renegotiate their relationships with Disney films by examining the ways in which the TDG and FDG differ. The influence of subsidiary studios on Disney genre formation and audience perceptions, the ways in which adults can and have responded to Disney films, and the responses of Disney films to adult audiences were all discussed in this context.

Relationships between audiences and films are not easily divided into positive and negative as they experience flux – and as a number of respondents claimed, their relationships with Disney films varies depending on the identity and quality of the film in question. However, many more respondents have been

happy to characterise their relationships with Disney films as either positive or negative, albeit with qualifications or reservations, and most of these relationships appear to be based on an understanding of Disney films as animated, as exemplified by the FDG.

Although Disney has been making live-action films for decades, few have penetrated shared audience perceptions of Disney, and only a handful of live-action releases have received the same attention that Disney lavishes on its animated features with re-releases, theme park rides, and consumer products. Despite the fact that Walt Disney and his successors claimed to produce films for all ages, the perception of Disney films as children's entertainment remains, wrapped up in the perception of Disney films as animation. Disney has perpetuated the children's film perception with consumer products aimed at children, with UK high street Disney Stores in particular lacking merchandise for adults.

Disney's attempts to target adult audiences led to the creation of new studios Touchstone and Hollywood Pictures, and the acquisition of Miramax, but these studios have been superseded by a return to an emphasis on the Disney identity. Disney has sought to broaden its brand with the acquisitions of Pixar, Marvel and Lucasfilm. These studios have brought their own brand identities and audiences with them, but have been integrated into Disney theme parks, merchandising and filmmaking. They have partly been responsible for a shift from the traditional TDG to TDG 2.0, but audiences have tended to ignore, consciously or otherwise, these films in their understandings of the Disney genre, thus the FDG has remained constant.

It appears that audiences have a blind spot for those films that do not fit into their idea of the Disney genre, particularly those that challenge the notion of Disney films being aimed at children, or their perceptions of the FDG are so entrenched, having been formed by years of exposure to animated Disney films from childhood, that negotiating films that are incompatible with their view of the FDG proves difficult. That is not to say that audiences' opinions on Disney films remain fixed from childhood to adulthood – while their perception of the FDG is likely to remain constant, their attitude towards the FDG is open to change, thus they may come to enjoy Disney films more or less than they used to. Kirsten

Drotner has suggested that for adults Disney films operate as an 'important and acknowledged "memory bridge", a willed catalyst to remembering – perhaps even reliving – past joys' (2004, p.145) but they could equally be catalysts for remembering negative experiences.

Henry Jenkins observed that 'the skills needed to make sense of popular texts emerge through informal education practices as we spend time consuming media with friends and family' (2007, p.16). In a similar way, audiences develop their perception of the FDG through greater time spent consuming Disney and non-Disney films, and through the influence of other audience members' perceptions.

Negative attitudes about Disney are well summarised by Ron Suskind in *Life, Animated* (2014, pp.21-22, italics in original) when he discusses his:

> graduate-degreed baby boomer friends [who] had a world-wise, right-minded riff: that Disney was a voracious, commercialised, myth-co-opting brainwasher, using primal tales to shape young minds into noxious conclusions about everything from dead mothers (forget about stepmothers) to what happens to thrill-seeking boys (*Pinocchio*'s Pleasure Island, as donkeys *forever*) to how a princess ought to look (utterly unattainable!), all before the tykes knew what hit them.

This 'right-minded' viewpoint has become the default, clichéd response for adult audiences who have been unable to negotiate their childhood interest in Disney films into adult acceptance or enjoyment. It is clearly based on an animation-fuelled perception of the FDG, but then again so is the persistently positive attitude towards Disney based on nostalgia and driven by Disney memes and the trappings of fandom.

Henry Jenkins explains how childhood has become a focus of adult nostalgia because 'childhood is celebrated as a time of sensual discoveries and playful experimentation, as an age free from adult demands and responsibilities' (2007, p.155). These sentiments accord with audience perceptions of Disney films as oases of comfort and pleasure apart from the concerns of adult lives. David Buckingham develops this notion of nostalgia for childhood concerns:

> the idea of childhood serves as a depository for qualities which adults regard both as precious and as problematic – qualities which they cannot tolerate as part of themselves; yet it can also serve as a dream world into which we can retreat from the pressures and responsibilities of maturity (2000, p.10).

Although talking about childhood, Buckingham could just as easily have been talking about the relationships that adults have with Disney films – finding them both precious and problematic, as well as providing comfort and refuge from the pressures of adult life. Disney films could therefore be seen as a surrogate for memories of childhood, which some adult audiences are happy to return to, but others feel unable to access.

Ron Suskind discovered through his son's experiences with autism that Disney films are capable of having a much more profound effect on adult audiences who are unaware of or able to see past both the negative and positive clichés of the FDG. Fixed perceptions of the FDG have proven to be resistant to change, no matter how Disney has tried to adapt to modern sensibilities and concerns, due to the longevity, reach and dominance of the established Disney brand that has informed the FDG.

When Disney announces a forthcoming release schedule of remakes, sequels and franchise extensions, it may inspire collective dismay about a dearth of originality and risk-taking, but such films have proven wildly successful with audiences (and sometimes with critics). Modern Disney films have become monuments to nostalgia for a particular public perception of Disney, allowing audiences to relive their childhood memories through new filmmaking technologies. Ultimately, audiences have shown that although they are open to the odd original Disney release, they are much more comfortable with cover versions and new arrangements of the hits they already know.

Chapter 8
Conclusion:
Happily Ever After

> But what Walt Disney seemed to know was that while there is
> very little grown-up in a child, there is a lot of child in every
> grown-up. To a child this weary world is brand new, gift
> wrapped; Disney tried to keep it that way for adults.
>
> (Eric Sevareid, CBS Evening News obituary for Walt Disney in
> 1966, quoted in Thomas, 1994, p.355)

8.1 The Researcher's Journey[152]

Prior to embarking on this research I was already anecdotally aware that many adults like me from the ordinary world draw pleasure from watching Disney films and engaging in associated experiences such as visiting theme parks, collecting merchandise and sharing online memes. I was also aware of a strong counter-current of antagonism from those who do not like Disney films or the Walt Disney Company (WDC) generally. I had found myself having to defend my interest in an apparently inappropriate source of pleasure, which resonated with my experiences as a gay man.

Initially I set out to study Disney's business practices and to determine what distinguished a Disney film from a Pixar film, a Marvel film, a Touchstone film, or a Disney TV movie, before turning my attention to a British perspective on Disney films. But after a year of research preparation, I kept returning to my frustration with Disney not being taken seriously as a source of pleasure for adult audiences[153] and with the common assumption that Disney films equal

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[152] Christopher Vogler's description of the Hero's Journey (2007) provided inspiration for this reflection.
[153] Assumptions that gay men have a particular affinity with Disney films – such as comments made in a Gay Times magazine article about Disneyland Paris that claimed 'we're only too aware that many a gentlemen who prefers the company of gentlemen is an ardent fan of all things Disney' (Scott, 2015, p.149), or a recent Huffington Post piece entitled 'Why Do Gay Men Love Disney?!' (Wavey, 2017) – were not reflected in my audience research; bisexual women were actually the most well represented non-heterosexual demographic among my respondents.

animation, and these frustrations became a call to adventure that resulted in the three research questions presented in this thesis[154].

A review of existing audience research into Disney and their films highlighted several gaps, especially since the most comprehensive insights into Disney film audiences had been carried out by Paul Wells (1998), Janet Wasko (2001a, 2001c), and the Global Disney Audiences Project (GDAP) (Wasko et al., 2001) over 15 years ago. Since that time Disney had radically altered its film studio line-up and become a – if not *the* – dominant studio in Hollywood. It might have been easy to refuse the call to investigate Disney audiences in light of the work done by the GDAP, but omissions and assumptions in the research convinced me that more work needed to be done.

One of the gaps in the existing literature on Disney – and there is a lot of Disney literature, since there is a sizable audience for Disney texts, both academic and popular – involved the assumptions that are made about what a Disney film is. Wasko has considered Disney from many angles, from films to theme parks to audiences, and the GDAP took a global approach that covered comic books, cultural identity, and Disneyification, but no research had yet attempted to define Disney in terms of its most visible, accessible form, that of the feature film. It seemed that academics were as guilty as laypersons in taking the concept of a Disney film for granted, and similarly no one had considered Disney films as a distinct genre.

I thus found myself with two strands to the research – defining the Disney film genre, and discovering audience perceptions of such a genre. In order to address these two strands I therefore had to construct a mixed methods methodology that drew on audience and reception studies methods as well as statistical methods. A third strand, and third research question, then presented itself in a comparison of the Disney film genres suggested by Disney's tangible output and audience perceptions.

My first research question appeared deceptively simple, although no one had yet provided an answer: what is a Disney film? To answer this question I

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[154] The late Professor Kevin Barnhurst gave me excellent advice in the formative stages of the research when he recommended that I focus on what 'pissed me off the most'.

turned to the Disney films themselves, which, following the establishment of an operational definition that set the scope of the research, amounted to 390 films released between 1937 and 2015. Lacking the resources to view every film myself, I carried out an output survey using data gathered and cross-checked from online and offline sources relating to all 390 films. Analysis of this data resulted in a definition of Disney films that I have called the Tangible Disney Genre (TDG).

I found that the TDG actually comes in two forms: the traditional TDG and the TDG 2.0. The traditional TDG relates to Disney films released between 1937 and the early 2000s. The films that fall into this genre are of a generally conservative makeup in terms of their white, heterosexual, and male-dominated casts of characters. They are also likely to be rendered in live-action, incorporating humour, fantasy and adventure in an original or adapted story that is suitable for all ages to enjoy. The TDG 2.0 has evolved from the traditional TDG in the 21st century, particularly since the acquisitions of Marvel and Lucasfilm, although the TDG 2.0 actually predates these acquisitions. In the early 2000s live-action Disney output began to become more self-reflexive, featuring better sexual and racial diversity among its casts (with minor acknowledgement of LGBT+ identities), with stories that were more likely to be remakes or part of franchises skewing towards older audiences, as evidenced by an increase in PG-13/12A certificates.

My second research question asked: how do adults perceive Disney films? This question allowed me to build on the audience research of the GDAP, but to focus particularly on the medium of film and adult audiences' relationships with Disney films. Determining that a sample survey would be the best way to understand the breadth of audience opinions, I created an online questionnaire to capture both quantitative and qualitative data. Circulating the questionnaire online I encountered allies and enemies – the former shared the link further with friends and family, while the latter criticised my questions. I discovered that no matter how much you rewrite and pilot the questions for an online survey, you cannot satisfy everyone; there is a precarious balance between brevity, inclusivity and accessibility.

I originally planned to run several focus groups during the six-month lifespan of the questionnaire, but I waited until it had closed in order for focus group questions to build upon the results of the survey. At the final tally, 3,524 respondents completed the questionnaire, almost triple the number that had participated in the early GDAP research. This resulted in a wealth of data, which I coded using both SPSS Text Analytics for Surveys and Excel. The focus groups were harder to execute as potential participants did not seem as ready to freely give up an hour of their time to discuss Disney films as they were to spend 15 minutes on the distraction of an online questionnaire. I found the best way to arrange focus groups was through existing social groups, and by exploiting my own connections, such as at Leeds University Union and my part-time theatre job. The focus groups were not representative of the population who responded to the questionnaire (nor were they representative, or expected to be, of the broader adult population), but they provided additional perspectives to my work on audience perceptions of Disney films.

The results of the audience research brought me to a definition of the Fantasy Disney Genre (FDG), representing the shared imaginary idea of a Disney film that is perceived by audiences. Like the TDG, the FDG can be further bisected, this time into positive (+FDG) and negative (−FDG) perspectives, based on the prejudices and experiences of the individual audience member. Broadly speaking, those who subscribe to the +FDG perspective find Disney's conservative attitudes nostalgic, self-referential humour engaging and predictable storytelling reassuring, whereas those with a −FDG outlook find conservative values problematic, humour childish and predictability formulaic and boring. All agree that Disney films are characterised by animation, however, and this informs all other attributes of the FDG, whether positive or negative.

Armed with the reward of not one but two defined Disney genres, I moved on to my third question: how do adult audiences (re)negotiate their relationships with Disney films? I approached this question via a comparison between the TDG and FDG, referring back to my output survey and audience research, and drawing on several interviews with parties involved in producing

Disney film related content and my own ethnographic experiences as a Disney fan and academic.

Further consideration of Disney's subsidiary studios and evolution to the TDG 2.0 indicated that the FDG has a rather fixed and inflexible aspect that modern adult audiences are unwilling or unable to overcome so that they can accommodate non-animated Disney films or those that were not part of the Disney they encountered as children. The FDG has not evolved concurrently with the TDG 2.0. Reviewing different adult responses to Disney films, and Disney's addresses to adult audiences, demonstrated that adult fans and fanatics are able to find ways to positively negotiate their relationships with Disney, even though the most common and accessible Disney films and their spin-offs (from film sequels to merchandise and beyond) overwhelmingly target children.

The abundance of consumer products based on Disney films are made for children and predominantly based on animated characters (although Marvel and Lucasfilm properties have become a significant part of Disney merchandising). Disney is responsible for emphasising their association with animation through film re-releases and remakes that favour the Disney animated Classic film over their more abundant live-action back catalogue. Disney continues to perpetuate, through careful curation of their back catalogue, the common image of Disney films as represented by the FDG, despite continuing to produce films in the TDG 2.0 mould, thus the two genres remain separate. However, with Disney's present production trend of live-action remakes of animated Classics, they have found a rich seam of nostalgia to mine, that relies on audiences' understanding of and appetite for the FDG, but also mixes in a less conservative TDG 2.0 approach.

At the beginning of my research journey I was frustrated by the common perception that Disney films were all animated, and that they are not suitable entertainment for adult audiences. My research has demonstrated that animation is indeed not Disney's primary film output, but it is the dominant aspect of the FDG. Animation is disproportionately emphasised by many of Disney's filmmaking activities and influenced by audiences' childhood encounters with Disney animation. I was surprised to find that few of my

respondents described their enjoyment of Disney as *guilty* pleasures, and 90% of them purported to enjoy Disney films on the whole, or at least they enjoyed what they perceived of as Disney films.

As is customary, at the end of this researcher's journey I have returned with an elixir or two for the academic field, in the form of original contributions, and I shall discuss these in the next section.

8.2 Original Contributions

There are three aspects to the original contributions generated by this research: the methodological approach; identification of Disney film genres; and an updated perspective on Disney audiences. In this section I will situate these contributions within the fields of Disney, audiences, and genre studies, as well as commenting on the use of ethnography as a research method.

8.2.1 Methodology and innovation of approach

Instead of concentrating on either audiences *or* the texts that they respond to, the mixed methods approach used in this research allowed for a comparison of both subjects. Previous Disney audience research has made assumptions about Disney films without properly defining their subject, thus colluding in the general audience perception of Disney films being animated, with all that this perception implies. When researchers assume that the Disney films that are the subjects of their research are all animated, they are obscuring the whole picture. Of course, research focused on Disney's animated films is important, but I would caution against making claims that such research is representative of the Disney film offer.

By taking a pragmatic, systematic, and holistic approach to Disney's tangible film output I have been able to identify those elements that make up the Tangible Disney Genre (which provides a solid foundation for comparing with the responses of audiences) and with the Fantasy Disney Genre, since understanding audience responses to a film or series of films is difficult if the films in question are not properly defined. Combining this statistical approach

with similar quantitative, but also qualitative, audience research using sample surveys for breadth and focus groups to provide depth allows for a more complete picture of Disney films and their reciprocal relationships with audiences to emerge.

While the mixed qualitative and quantitative methods employed in this research were specifically used to gain a better understanding of Disney films and their audiences, such an approach could also be applied to other film and television studios or genres. This methodology highlights the importance of studying both the media text (or genre) *and* the audiences that experience it to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between media and audiences.

An important component of the research was the use of my own experiences to both drive the initial research questions and as a device to structure the thesis. Rather than relying solely on my own experiences and producing a very narrow perspective of Disney film experiences (for example, see Booker, 2010), I used autoethnography to mediate between my roles as fan, researcher and author. In addressing adult perceptions of Disney films, I first began by examining my own perceptions, before widening the scope to investigate what over 3,500 other participants thought about Disney films, each contributing their own 'mini-autoethnographies' through focus group and online survey responses. Having then analysed the ways in which the Disney genres overlap and diverge, and how my participants' renegotiate their relationships with Disney films, I was able to apply what I had learned to my own experiences.

Employing autoethnography to share and comment on my own experiences allowed me to 'disrupt traditional and dominant ideas about research, particularly what research is and how research should be done' (Adams and Holman Jones, 2011, p.110). Traditional ideas of research suggest that academics and fans should be mutually exclusive, but being an aca-fan has advantages when it comes to interpreting and presenting findings via a personal case study. Being a fan of the subject under research does not (necessarily) mean a loss of perspective, and is a useful way of structuring complex

research, particularly when it draws on a mixture of qualitative and quantitative results.

8.2.2 Identification of Disney film genres: TDG and FDG

While a Disney film oeuvre – the works of the company as a whole – has existed since 1937 and grows with every new film release, the concept of an oeuvre is insufficient to describe the shared attributes of the typical Disney film, which is why I have identified Disney films as belonging to a genre. Defining Disney's output as a genre(s) is significant since film genres 'offer the best possible combination of known pleasures and novelty, as each film calls on the wider genre, both repeating it and remaking it anew' (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012, p.196). As has been shown in this research, Disney films offer known pleasures to audiences, but with the TDG 2.0 and its tendency towards remakes and franchises, there is also significant novelty to be found in the evolving Disney genre that both perpetuates and refines the genre's attributes.

With this research I have re-examined what a film genre can be, with the outcome being the definition of two distinct Disney genres. Rather than having a textual, industry or reception focus (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012), a genre often combines elements of all three. This research has demonstrated that a film genre proscribed through statistical analysis of a particular set of films does not necessarily accord with the film genre perceived by audiences. The differences between the oeuvre-derived TDG and the audience-perceived FDG illustrate the differences between texts and their audiences and show that defining a singular Disney film genre that combines both is not an easy prospect.

Disney films have previously been thought of as part of the animation or family film genres. As I have shown through the TDG, Disney films are much more likely to be live-action than animated, thus the animation genre is not synonymous with the Disney genre. Similarly, the TDG 2.0, which skews older than the traditional TDG, casts doubt upon Disney films always being considered part of the family genre. The family and animation genres are both rather broad categories, incorporating a whole host of other genres, from action

to western, as does the TDG, whereas the FDG is disproportionately weighted towards musicals and animation.

The data gathered and analysed in this research clearly shows that Disney films share enough common elements that can be described as a Disney genre, but one that is understood differently by film audiences and in relation to tangible film output. The different Disney genres point to the importance of audience perceptions in the creation and perpetuation of film genres, something that can be underestimated in genre studies research.

Defining Disney genres in this manner draws attention to the ways in which genres are formed and become part of an audience's lived experiences – this pushes at the boundaries of conventional ways of categorising films for analysis. Clearly identifying these genres and their points of connection and divergence through this research has raised several novel questions about genre: what happens when tangible genres and fantasy genres diverge; what is the fate of films that do not fit into the fantasy genre; what effect and limits does Disney's back catalogue curation have on notions of genre; and how do genres evolve to address issues of representation. Understanding what the Disney genre is, either tangibly or in the public consciousness, could lead to a more nuanced approach in discussions of Disney films in the field of Disney studies as well as the wider world of film research.

8.2.3 Updated Disney audience research

The benchmark Global Disney Audiences Project carried out its research over 15 years ago, and the WDC and Hollywood have been through significant changes since that time. Thus the present research represents the first major update on this ground-breaking early Disney audience research. It also broadens the scope of Disney films to encompass Marvel and Lucasfilm, studios that have become part of the Walt Disney Studios and WDC in significant ways.

Some may take issue with my decision to include Marvel, Lucasfilm, and even Pixar films within my definition of Disney film, however I would argue that Disney has (re)positioned these existing brands so that they have become

integral to the modern Disney identity. Previous subsidiary studios such as Touchstone, Hollywood and Miramax were kept at arm's length, and their association with the Disney name was less commonly known, whereas Marvel and Lucasfilm properties mingle with Disney and Pixar characters in the theme parks, Disney Stores, and perhaps soon on cinema screens[155]. To claim that the output of these subsidiary studios are not Disney films is to prioritise the FDG over the TDG and to deny that the Disney film has evolved.

It is clear from the data that informed the FDG, however, that most audiences are either ignorant of or less willing to consciously include Marvel and Lucasfilm in their understanding of a Disney film. Audiences' access to Disney films released up to 80 years ago – in particular Disney's animated Classics – is greater than ever today, with streaming, physical media, and fan interpretations available at the click of a button. Releases of new Disney films are unable to erase the memory or access to older Disney films, thus their perception of a Disney film – which the TDG 2.0 demonstrates is changing – remains somewhat fixed.

However, while leftist critics have tended to focus on individual films or taken the whole Disney genre – represented by their own narrow understanding of the FDG – to task for its conservative approach to representation (such as Budd and Kirsch, 2005, Booker, 2010, Harrington, 2014), audiences have shown that they are resistant to such interpretations. Those audiences who like Disney films are capable of making their own readings that either ignore the faults described by leftist critiques or are counterbalanced by other pleasures. Although a significant section of the audience (both those who do and do not enjoy Disney films) are aware of the lack of LGTB+ or racially diverse characters across the FDG (also reflected in the TDG), queer and alternative readings are still possible – the FDG still represents a source of comfort and pleasures, both nostalgic and immediate.

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[155] Disney's animated television series, *Phineas and Ferb* (2007-2015) has already had cross-over episodes featuring characters from Star Wars and Marvel comics interacting with original Disney characters. There is the potential for upcoming sequel *Ralph Breaks the Internet: Wreck-It Ralph 2* (2018b) to include characters from the wider WDC universe, as it is set to feature (non-Disney) computer game characters as well as multiple Disney Princesses.

When Walt Disney turned to live-action filmmaking in 1950, F. Maurice Speed wrote in the annual *Film Review* that 'after the first shock we all wondered, with a sinking feeling, if this move meant that Disney had abandoned what he can still do better than anyone else in the world' (1949, p.90), namely animation. But instead of abandoning animation, Disney complemented it with live-action productions, later adding natural history documentaries, special effects adventures and family comedies to the Disney oeuvre, until reaching a point where Disney films now incorporate Star Wars and The Avengers, and traditional 2D animation has given way to 3D CGI. From the days of Walt Disney to the present, the company has continually adapted its film output, and will no doubt continue to do so. To ignore this legacy and its role in the TDG is only to understand half of the Disney story. But as this research has shown, ignoring the Fantasy Disney Genre also obscures how the Disney genre is really experienced and understood by audiences. This research therefore provides a comprehensive overview of Disney film output to better contextualise the TDG (both traditional and 2.0), and adult audiences' relationships with it.

Based on input from over 3,500 participants, the largest piece of Disney audience research so far conducted, this research has shed more light on the different ways in which audiences enjoy or shun Disney films in a modern day context. In the next section I consider how the foundations laid by this research can be built upon to increase understandings of the Disney film genres.

8.3 Future Research

As previously mentioned, the Walt Disney Company has changed significantly since the Global Disney Audiences Project (GDAP) carried out its major investigation of Disney audiences in 2001, and it is impossible to predict how it might change in another decade or two, although I would not be surprised if Disney were to acquire companies like Netflix or Lego[156]. It would therefore be

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[156] As if to prove how unpredictable Disney is, on 14th December 2017 it was announced that they were buying 'the bulk of 21st Century Fox's business for $52.4bn (£39m)... includ[ing] Fox's film and television studios' (BBC, 2017) . The purchase happened less than a month after I was successfully examined on this thesis. While this acquisition has no direct impact on the present thesis, it will provide an interesting source of future Disney research.

worthwhile carrying out further audience research in the future to take account of changes in perception of the WDC and its film studios (especially since in the future Disney films could be streamed in virtual reality directly into individual homes on their premiere – the future of film is as uncertain as the future of Disney).

Future research would also be helpful to determine whether the acquisitions of Pixar, Marvel and Lucasfilm have altered the FDG for children growing up with Disney today – will they include Marvel's super hero films in their shared perception of Disney films as they develop to adulthood, or will the animated Classic remain the assumed Disney standard? Repeating the present research in a decade would also create an opportunity to determine how the TDG 2.0 has evolved, as it is still a relatively new branch of the TDG.

The present research has mainly been carried out from a Western perspective – although the sample survey reached respondents across the world, the vast majority were British and American, plus focus group participants and my own experiences were rooted in a British context. It would thus be instructive to carry out focus groups in different countries, as the GDAP did previously, to obtain alternative perspectives on Disney films and their perceptions. The methodology employed in this research should be scalable to studies of film genres in other countries, and could also be adapted to national cinema output. This methodology could be employed to define a German film genre using American audience perceptions, alongside a study of the German films that have been released in the US, for example.

It would be hoped that future Disney research might proceed with the TDG and FDG definitions in mind, particularly when it comes to making claims about Disney films that are based only on the 54 animated Classics. Much has already been written about race and gender in Disney animated Classics, but little attention has been paid to these subjects as they apply to Disney films outside these narrow parameters. Hopefully the present research has illuminated some areas of Disney film history that have yet to be fully explored. While gender has not been at the forefront of the present research, it has played a role in some of the responses; thus it would be instructive to focus

further on gendered responses to the Disney genre, as well as film genres more widely.

I have suggested that the film output of the WDC is the only one that can be ascribed to its own genre unlike the films of other major studios, such as Warner Bros., Paramount or Sony. Discussion in focus groups supports this hypothesis, as respondents were generally unable to answer when asked to name the attributes of films from such studios, but confidently listed attributes they expected from Disney films. Research into the film outputs of these other studios and their audiences would indicate whether Disney really is unique in terms of inhabiting its own genre. For example, would it be possible to carry out an output survey of 20th Century Fox films and thus describe an identifiable Tangible Fox Genre, and would audiences have a clearly perceived shared understanding of a Fantasy Fox Genre?[157] I doubt it, but further research would clarify the matter.

Since this research, as well as that of the GDAP, only dealt with adults and their memories and perceptions of Disney films, it would be beneficial for future research to also question children, to discover their perceptions, although such research would require enhanced ethical considerations. If possible, a long range study questioning the same children about their perceptions as they grow into adulthood would allow more robust conclusions to be drawn about how perceptions and experiences of Disney change.

The TDG and FDG have both been discussed in this research purely as they apply to Disney films themselves. I have not been able to consider the wider implications of the Disney film genres, and the films of other studios that may also fall into the TDG or FDG categories. For example, films such as *Anastacia* (1997b), *Shrek* (2001b) and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (1968a) may have been misidentified as Disney films by audiences due to their adherence to the attributes of the FDG, and they may also follow (intentionally or otherwise) the conventions of the TDG. Further investigation of the impact and influence of the FDG and TDG on filmmaking beyond Disney would offer further clarity on the Disney genres.

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[157] As per the previous footnote, my choice of 20th Century Fox as an example seems oddly prescient now. It remains to be seen how Disney will assimilate Fox's film output into the Walt Disney Company.

Finally, the TDG was determined through data gathered second-hand (but cross-checked) from Disney and non-Disney online and offline sources. If resources had permitted, the attributes of the films could have been identified by a viewing of all 390 films by a single researcher to ensure consistency. However, the data gathered was still considered robust, and was amended by the present researcher where discrepancies were known through my familiarity with particular films. Having the opportunity to view all 390 Disney films may result in additional common Disney film attributes being observed, regarding the way stories are told for example, and thus refine the TDG further. It would also be a pretty good way for a Disney academic and fan to spend over 628 hrs.

It is cheering that I can still call myself a Disney fan after immersing myself in Disney research for three years, particularly in the face of hundreds of comments from participants that both praised and berated Disney films. At times when reading through the comments of respondents who do not enjoy Disney films I began to question my motives and the pleasures I derive from them. I was also surprised to find that the majority who enjoy Disney films are quite open about it, not characterising their enjoyment as guilty pleasures. Similarly, when I have shared my research topic with acquaintances I have been gladdened by how readily they share their enthusiasm for the genre. Of course, nearly everyone I mention the topic of my research to begins talking about animated Disney films, but I can now challenge this perception, armed with a considerable amount of data.

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101 Dalmatians II: Patch's London Adventure, 2003a. [Video]. USA: Disney Television Animation, Walt Disney Pictures. 70 mins.

101 Dalmatians: The Series, 1997-1998. [Television Series]. USA: Walt Disney Television Animation/Jumbo Pictures for ABC tx. ABC 13/09/1997-04/03/1998. 65 x 22 mins.

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The Absent-Minded Professor, 1961a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 92 mins.

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The Adventures of Huck Finn, 1993a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 108 mins.

The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad, 1949. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 68 mins.

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Air Bud, 1997a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Keystone Pictures. 98 mins.

Aladdin, 1992a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 90 mins.

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day, 2014a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, 21 Laps, Jim Henson Company, Animal Logic, Land of Plenty Productions. 81 mins.

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[158] Note that individual directors or showrunners are not listed in the filmography as they are not considered to be the sole authors of these works.

Amy, 1981a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 100 mins.

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Ant-Man, 2015b. [Film]. USA: Marvel Enterprises, Marvel Studios. 117 mins.

Arjun: The Warrior Prince, 2012a. [Film]. India: UTV Motion Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures. 96 mins.

Atlantis: The Lost Empire, 2001a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Feature Animation, Walt Disney Pictures. 95 mins.

Avatar, 2009a. [Film]. UK/USA: Twentieth Century Fox, Dune Entertainment, Ingenious Film Partners, Lightstorm Entertainment. 162 mins.

The Avengers, 2012b. [Film]. USA: Marvel Studios, Paramount Pictures. 143 mins.

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Babes in Toyland, 1961b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 106 mins.

Bambi, 1942a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 70 mins.

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Benji, 1974a. [Film]. USA: Mulberry Square Productions. 86 mins.

Benji the Hunted, 1987. [Film]. USA: Embark Productions, Millennium Productions, Mulberry Square Productions, Silver Screen Partners III, Walt Disney Pictures. 88 mins.

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Billy Bathgate, 1991b. [Film]. USA: Touchstone Pictures, Touchwood Pacific Partners 1. 106 mins.

The Birth of a Nation, 1915. [Film]. USA: David W. Griffith Corporation, Epoch Producing Corporation. 195 mins.

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The Black Hole, 1979. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 98 mins.

Black Panther, 2018. [Film]. USA: Marvel Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. TBC mins.

Brave, 2012d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Pixar Animation Studios. 93 mins.

Candleshoe, 1978a. [Film]. UK/USA: Walt Disney Productions. 101 mins.

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Captain America: The Winter Soldier, 2014c. [Film]. USA: Marvel Entertainment, Marvel Studios. 136 mins.

Cars, 2006a. [Film]. USA: Pixar Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 117 mins.

Cheetah, 1989a. [Film]. USA: Silver Screen Partners III, Walt Disney Pictures. 83 mins.

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, 1968a. [Film]. USA: Dramatic Features, Warfield Productions. 144 mins.

A Christmas Carol, 2009b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, ImageMovers Digital. 96 mins.

Cinderella, 1950a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 74 mins.

Cinderella, 2015d. [Film]. USA/UK: Allison Shearmur Productions, Beagle Pug Films, Genre Films, Walt Disney Pictures. 105 mins.

Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen, 2004a. [Film]. Germany/USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Confessions Productions, Argentum Film Produktion und Betriebes KG. 89 mins.

Cool Runnings, 1993b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 98 mins.

Cool World, 1992c. [Film]. USA: Paramount Pictures. 102 mins.

Country, 1984a. [Film]. USA: Far West, Panagea, Touchstone Pictures. 105 mins.

Creed, 2015e. [Film]. USA: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures, Warner Bros. Pictures, New Line Cinema, Chartoff Winkler. 133 mins.

The Crimson Wing: Mystery of the Flamingos, 2008b. [Film]. USA/UK: Natural Light Films, Kudos Film and Television, Kudos Pictures, Walt Disney Studios. 78 mins.

Daredevil, 2015--a. [Television Series]. USA: ABC Studios/DeKnight Productions/Goddard Textiles/Marvel Entertainment/The Walt Disney Company for Netflix tx. Netflix 10/04/2015-. 54 mins.

The Dark Knight, 2008c. [Film]. USA/UK: Warner Bros., Legendary Entertainment, Syncopy, DC Comics. 152 mins.

Davy Crockett and the River Pirates, 1956a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 81 mins.

Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier, 1955a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 93 mins.

Deadpool, 2016c. [Film]. USA: 20th Century Fox, Marvel Entertainment, Kinberg Genre, The Donners' Company, TSG Entertainment. 108 mins.

Deep Throat, 1972b. [Film]. USA: Gerard Damiano Film Productions (GDFP). 61 mins.

The Defenders, 2017--a. [Television Series]. USA: Marvel Television/ABC Studios/Netflix/Walt Disney Telvision for Netflix tx. Netflix 18/08/2017-. 50 mins.

The Devil and Max Devlin, 1981b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 96 mins.

Dinosaur, 2000b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, The Secret Lab, Walt Disney Feature Animation. 82 mins.

Disney's Newsies: The Broadway Musical, 2017b. [Film]. USA: Fathom Events, PJM Productions, Steam Motion & Sound, Disney Theatrical Group. 149 mins.

Disney Time, 1964-1994. [Television Series]. UK: BBC for tx. BBC1 25/12/1964-29/08/1994. 103 x 30 mins.

Disneyland, 1954-1958. [Television Series]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures for ABC tx. ABC 27/10/1954-14/05/1958. 99 x 60 mins.

Do Dooni Chaar, 2010b. [Film]. India: Planman Motion Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures. 112 mins.

Dracula, 1992d. [Film]. USA: American Zoetrope, Columbia Pictures Corporation, Osiris Films. 128 mins.

Dumbo, 1941a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 64 mins.

E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial, 1982a. [Film]. USA: Universal Pictures. 115 mins.

Emil and the Detectives, 1964a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 92 mins.

Enchanted, 2007a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Josephson Entertainment, Andalasia Productions, Right Coast Productions. 107 mins.

Escape to Witch Mountain, 1975b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 97 mins.

Fantasia, 1940a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 125 mins.

Fantasia/2000, 1999a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Walt Disney Television Animation, Ethanimation Studios, Richard Purdum Productions, Walt Disney Feature Animation. 75 mins.

The Film Programme, 2016d. [Radio]. BBC: Radio 4. 28 mins.

Finding Dory, 2016e. [Film]. USA: Pixar Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 97 mins.

Finding Nemo, 2003b. [Film]. USA: Pixar Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 100 mins.

First Kid, 1996b. [Film]. USA: Caravan Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures. 91 mins.

Flowers and Trees, 1932. [Theatrical Short]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 8 mins.

Flubber, 1997c. [Film]. USA: Great Oaks Entertainment, Walt Disney Pictures. 93 mins.

Follow Me, Boys!, 1966a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 131 mins.

The Fox and the Hound, 1981c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 82 mins.

Frankenweenie, 2012e. [Film]. USA: Tim Burton Productions, Walt Disney Pictures. 87 mins.

Freaky Friday, 1976a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 95 mins.

Freaky Friday, 2003c. [Film]. USA: Casual Friday Productions, Gunn Fillms, Walt Disney Pictures. 97 mins.

Fritz the Cat, 1972c. [Film]. USA: Aurica Finance Company, Black Ink, Fritz Productions, Steve Krantz Productions. 78 mins.

Frozen, 2013a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 106 mins.

Fun and Fancy Free, 1947. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 73 mins.

The Game Plan, 2007b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Mayhem Pictures, Monkey Dance Productions. 110 mins.

Gargoyles the Movie: The Heroes Awaken, 1995b. [Video]. USA: Buena Vista Television, Disney Television Animation, Walt Disney Animation Japan. 92 mins.

George of the Jungle, 1967a. [Television Series]. USA: ABC/Jay Ward Productions for ABC tx. ABC 09/09/1967-30/12/1967. 17 x 30 mins.

George of the Jungle, 1997d. [Film]. USA: Avnet/Kerner Productions, Mandeville Films, Walt Disney Pictures. 92 mins.

The Ghost of Cypress Swamp, The Wonderful World of Disney, 1977a. [Television Episode]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures for NBC tx. NBC 13/03/1977. 120 mins.

Glory Road, 2006b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Jerry Bruckheimer Films, Texas Western Productions, Glory Road Productions. 118 mins.

The Good Dinosaur, 2015f. [Film]. USA: Pixar Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 93 mins.

A Goofy Movie, 1995c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Walt Disney Television Animation, DisneyToon Studios. 78 mins.

The Great Locomotive Chase, 1956b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 85 mins.

The Great Mouse Detective, 1986. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Silver Screen Partners II. 74 mins.

The Greatest Game Ever Played, 2005a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Fairway Films. 120 mins.

Greyfriars Bobby: The True Story of a Dog, 1961c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 87 mins.

Guardians of the Galaxy, 2014d. [Film]. USA: Marvel Enterprises, Marvel Studios. 121 mins.

Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2, 2017c. [Film]. USA: Marvel Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 137 mins.

Gus, 1976b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 96 mins.

The Hand Behind the Mouse: The Ub Iwerks Story, 1999b. [Film]. USA: Leslie Iwerks Productions, Walt Disney Pictures. 90 mins.

Hannah Montana & Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert, 2008d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 78 mins.

The Happiest Millionaire, 1967b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 159 mins.

The Haunted Mansion, 2003d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Gunn Films, Doom Buggy Productions. 88 mins.

Heavyweights, 1995d. [Film]. USA: Caravan Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures. 100 mins.

Herbie Fully Loaded, 2005b. [Film]. USA: Robert Simonds Productions, Walt Disney Pictures. 101 mins.

Hexe Lilli: Der Drache und das magische Buch, 2009c. [Film]. Germany/Italy/Austria: Babelsberg Film, Blue Eyes Fiction, Blue Eyes Film & Television, Buena Vista International, Classic, Dor Film Produktionsgesellschaft, Steinweg Emotion Pictures, Studio Babelsberg, Trixter Film. 89 mins.

High School Musical, 2006c. [TV Movie]. USA: Disney Channel/Salty Pictures/First Street Films for Disney Channel tx. Disney Channel 20/01/2006. 98 mins.

High School Musical 3: Senior Year, 2008e. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Borden Rosenbush Entertainment. 112 mins.

Hocus Pocus, 1993c. [Film]. USA: Rhythm & Hues Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 96 mins.

Home on the Range, 2004b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Walt Disney Feature Animation. 76 mins.

Honey, I Shrunk the Kids, 1989b. [Film]. USA: Buena Vista Pictures, Doric Productions, Silver Screen Partners III, Walt Disney Pictures. 93 mins.

The Hunchback of Notre Dame, 1996c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Feature Animation, Walt Disney Pictures. 91 mins.

Ice Princess, 2005c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Bridget Johnson Films, Skate Away Productions. 98 mins.

In Search of the Castaways, 1962. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 98 mins.

The Incredible Hulk, 2008f. [Film]. USA: Marvel Enterprises, Marvel Studios, MVL Incredible Productions, Universal Pictures, Valhalla Motion Pictures. 112 mins.

The Incredibles, 2004c. [Film]. USA: Pixar Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 115 mins.

Inside Out, 2015g. [Film]. USA: Pixar Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 95 mins.

Inspector Gadget, 1983-1986. [Television Series]. USA/Canada/France/Japan/Taiwan: DIC Entertainment/France 3/Nelvana/Field Communications/LBS Communications/TMS Entertainment/Cuckoo's Nest Studios/Lorimar Telepictures for Syndication tx. 12/09/1983-01/02/1986. 86 x 30 mins.

Inspector Gadget, 1999c. [Film]. USA: Caravan Pictures, DIC Entertainment, Walt Disney Pictures. 78 mins.

Into the Woods, 2014e. [Film]. USA: Lucamar Productions, Marc Platt Productions, Moving Picture Company, Walt Disney Pictures. 125 mins.

Iron Fist, 2017--b. [Television Series]. USA: Marvel Television/Devilina Productions/ABC Studios/Netflix/Marvel Entertainment/Walt Disney Telvision for Netflix tx. Netflix 17/03/2017-. 55 mins.

Iron Man, 2008g. [Film]. USA: Dark Blades Films, Fairview Entertainment, Marvel Enterprises, Marvel Studios, Paramount Pictures. 126 mins.

Iron Man 2, 2010c. [Film]. USA: Fariview Entertainment, Marvel Enterprises, Marvel Studios, Paramount Pictures. 124 mins.

Iron Man 3, 2013b. [Film]. USA: DMG Entertainment, Illusion Entertainment, Marvel Studios, Paramount Pictures, Taurus Studios. 130 mins.

James and the Giant Peach, 1996d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Allied Filmmakers, Skellington Productions, Inc. 79 mins.

Jessica Jones, 2015--b. [Television Series]. USA: ABC Studios/Marvel Studios/Tall Girls Productions for Netflix tx. Netflix 20/11/2015-. 56 mins.

John Carter, 2012f. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 132 mins.

Jungle 2 Jungle, 1997e. [Film]. USA: TF1 Films Production, Walt Disney Pictures. 105 mins.

The Jungle Book, 1967c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 78 mins.

The Jungle Book, 2016f. [Film]. USA: Fairview Entertainment, Moving Picture Company, Walt Disney Pictures. 106 mins.

The Jungle Book 2, 2003e. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Television Animation, DisneyToon Studios, Walt Disney Animation Australia, Walt Disney Pictures. 72 mins.

Jurassic Park, 1993d. [Film]. USA: Universal Pictures, Amblin Entertainment. 127 mins.

Jurassic World, 2015h. [Film]. USA: Universal Pictures, Amblin Entertainment, Legendary Entertainment, Dentsu, Fuji Television Network, The Kennedy/Marshall Company. 124 mins.

Khoobsurat, 2014f. [Film]. India: Anil Kapoor Film Company, Walt Disney Pictures. 130 mins.

Kniga masterov, 2009d. [Film]. Russia: Walt Disney Pictures. 101 mins.

The Lego Movie, 2014g. [Film]. USA: The Lego Group, Lin Pictures, RatPac-Dune Entertainment, Vertigo Entertainment, Village Roadshow Pictures, Warner Animation Group, Warner Bros. 100 mins.

Life, Animated, 2016g. [Film]. USA: A&E Indie Films, Motto Pictures, Roger Ross Williams Productions. 92 mins.

The Light in the Forest, 1958a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 83 mins.

Lilo & Stitch, 2002a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 85 mins.

The Lion King, 1994b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 88 mins.

The Little Mermaid, 1989c. [Film]. USA: Silver Screen Partners IV, Walt Disney Pictures. 83 mins.

The Littlest Outlaw, 1955b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 73 mins.

The Living Desert, 1953a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 69 mins.

The Lizzie McGuire Movie, 2003f. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Teen Life Productions. 94 mins.

Logan, 2017d. [Film]. USA: 20th Century Fox, Marvel Entertainment, Kinberg Genre, The Donners' Company, TSG Entertainment. 141 mins.

The Lone Ranger, 1949-1957. [Television Series]. USA: Apex Film Corp./Wrather Productions for ABC tx. ABC 15/09/1949-06/06/1957. 221 x 30 mins.

The Lone Ranger, 2013c. [Film]. USA: Jerry Bruckheimer Films, Walt Disney Pictures, Blind Wink, Infinitum Nihil. 150 mins.

The Love Bug, 1968b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 108 mins.

Luke Cage, 2016-. [Television Series]. USA: ABC Studios/Marvel Studios/Disney-ABC Domestic Television/Marvel

Entertainment/Netflix/Marvel Television/The Walt Disney Company for Netflix tx. Netflix 30/09/2016-. 55 mins.

Make Mine Music, 1946a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 75 mins.

Maleficent, 2014h. [Film]. USA: Roth Films, Walt Disney Pictures. 97 mins.

The Man from Snowy River, 1982b. [Film]. Australia: Cambridge Films, Michael Edgley International. 102 mins.

Man of Steel, 2013d. [Film]. USA: DC Comics, DC Entertainment, Legendary Entertainment, Warner Bros. 143 mins.

The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh, 1977b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 74 mins.

Marnie, 1964b. [Film]. USA: Universal Pictures. 130 mins.

Mars Needs Moms, 2011b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, ImageMovers Digital. 88 mins.

Mary Poppins, 1964c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 139 mins.

McFarland, USA, 2015i. [Film]. USA: Mayhem Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures. 129 mins.

Meet the Deedles, 1998a. [Film]. USA: DiC Enterprises, Peak Productions, Walt Disney Pictures. 93 mins.

Melody Time, 1948. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 75 mins.

The Mickey Mouse Club, 1955-1959. [Television Series]. USA: Walt Disney Productions for ABC tx. ABC 03/10/1955-25/09/1959. 260 x 60 mins / 130 x 30 mins.

Midnight Madness, 1980a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 112 mins.

The Mighty Ducks, 1992e. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Touchwood Pacific Partners 1, Avnet/Kerner Productions. 100 mins.

Mighty Joe Young, 1998b. [Film]. USA: RKO Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures. 114 mins.

Million Dollar Arm, 2014i. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Roth Films, Mayhem Pictures. 124 mins.

Million Dollar Baby, 2004d. [Film]. USA: Warner Bros., Lakeshore Entertainment, Malpaso Productions, Albert S. Ruddy Productions. 132 mins.

Miracle, 2004e. [Film]. USA: Pop Pop Productions, Determination Productions, Mayhem Productions, Solaris, Sports Studio, Walt Disney Pictures. 135 mins.

The Misadventures of Merlin Jones, 1964d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 91 mins.

Moana, 2016h. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 107 mins.

The Monkey's Uncle, 1965a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 87 mins.

Monkey Kingdom, 2015j. [Film]. USA: Disneynature. 81 mins.

The Moon-Spinners, 1964e. [Film]. USA/UK/Argentina: Walt Disney Productions. 118 mins.

Morning Light, 2008h. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 97 mins.

Mr. Magoo, 1997f. [Film]. USA: Nearsighted Productions, Walt Disney Pictures. 87 mins.

Mulan, 1998c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Feature Animation, Walt Disney Pictures. 88 mins.

The Mummy, 2017e. [Film]. USA: Sean Daniel Company, Secret Hideout, Universal Pictures. 100 mins.

The Muppet Christmas Carol, 1992f. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Jim Henson Productions. 85 mins.

Muppet Treasure Island, 1996e. [Film]. USA: The Jim Henson Company, Jim Henson Productions, Walt Disney Pictures. 99 mins.

Muppets Most Wanted, 2014j. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Mandeville Films, Babieka, The Muppets Studio. 107 mins.

Music Land, 1955c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 69 mins.

My Favorite Martian, 1963-1966. [Television Series]. USA: CBS Television Network/Jack Chertok Television Productions for CBS tx. CBS 29/09/1963-01/05/1966. 107 x 30 mins.

My Favorite Martian, 1999d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 94 mins.

Napoleon and Samantha, 1972d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 92 mins.

National Treasure, 2004f. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Jerry Bruckheimer Films, Junction Entertainment, Saturn Films. 131 mins.

National Treasure: Book of Secrets, 2007c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Jerry Bruckheimer Films, Junction Entertainment, Saturn Films, Sparkler Entertainment, NT2 Productions. 124 mins.

Natural Born Killers, 1994c. [Film]. USA: Alcor Films, Ixtlan, J D Productions, New Regency Pictures, Regency Enterprises, Warner Bros. 118 mins.

Never Cry Wolf, 1983a. [Film]. USA: Amarok Productions Ltd., Walt Disney Productions. 105 mins.

Newsies, 1992g. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Touchwood Pacific Partners 1. 121 mins.

Night Crossing, 1982c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions, Bavaria Film. 107 mins.

The Nightmare Before Christmas, 1993e. [Film]. USA: Touchstone Pictures. 92 mins.

Now You See Him, Now You Don't, 1972e. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 88 mins.

The Odd Life of Timothy Green, 2012g. [Film]. USA: Monsterfoot Productions, Scott Sanders Productions, Walt Disney Pictures. 105 mins.

The Old Mill, 1937b. [Theatrical Short]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 9 mins.

Old Yeller, 1957. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 83 mins.

Once Upon a Warrior, 2011c. [Film]. India/USA: Walt Disney Pictures, A Bellyful of Dreams Entertainment. 133 mins.

One Hundred and One Dalmatians, 1961d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 79 mins.

One of Our Dinosaurs is Missing, 1975c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 100 mins.

Operation Dumbo Drop, 1995e. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Polygram Filmed Entertainment, Interscope Communications. 107 mins.

Out There, 1996. [Song]. USA: Walt Disney Records. 4.25 mins.

Oz the Great and Powerful, 2013e. [Film]. USA: Roth Films, Walt Disney Pictures. 130 mins.

The Parent Trap, 1961e. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 129 mins.

The Parent Trap, 1998d. [Film]. USA: The Meyers/Shyer Company, Walt Disney Pictures. 128 mins.

Pete's Dragon, 1977c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 128 mins.

Pete's Dragon, 2016i. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 103 mins.

Peter Pan, 1953b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 77 mins.

Phineas and Ferb, 2007-2015. [Television Series]. USA: Disney Television Animation for Disney Channel/Disney XD tx. Disney Channel 17/08/2007-12/06/2015. 130 x 22 mins.

Pinocchio, 1940b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures. 88 mins.

The Pirate Fairy, 2014k. [Film]. USA: DisneyToon Studios, Prana Animation Studios, Prana Studios. 78 mins.

Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End, 2007d. [Film]. USA: Jerry Bruckheimer Films, Second Mate Productions, Walt Disney Pictures. 169 mins.

Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl, 2003g. [Film]. USA: Jerry Bruckheimer Films, Walt Disney Pictures. 143 mins.

Planes, 2013f. [Film]. USA: Prana Animation Studios, DisneyToon Studios, Prana Studios. 93 mins.

Planes: Fire & Rescue, 2014l. [Film]. USA: Prana Animation Studios, DisneyToon Studios, Prana Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 83 mins.

Pocahontas, 1995f. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Feature Animation, Walt Disney Pictures. 81 mins.

Pollyanna, 1960. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 134 mins.

Pooh's Heffalump Movie, 2005d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, DisneyToon Studios. 68 mins.

Postman Pat: The Movie, 2014m. [Film]. UK: Classic Media, RGH Entertainment, Rubicon Group Holding. 88 mins.

Pretty Woman, 1990a. [Film]. USA: Silver Screen Partners IV, Touchstone Pictures. 119 mins.

Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time, 2010d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Jerry Bruckheimer Films. 116 mins.

The Princess and the Frog, 2009e. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 97 mins.

Queen of Katwe, 2016j. [Film]. USA: ESPN Films, Walt Disney Pictures. 124 mins.

Race to Witch Mountain, 2009f. [Film]. USA: Gunn Films, Walt Disney Pictures. 98 mins.

Ralph Breaks the Internet: Wreck-It Ralph 2, 2018b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. TBC mins.

Ratatouille, 2007e. [Film]. USA: Pixar Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 111 mins.

The Reluctant Dragon, 1941b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 74 mins.

The Rescuers, 1977d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 78 mins.

The Rescuers Down Under, 1990b. [Film]. USA: Silver Screen Partners IV, Walt Disney Feature Animation, Walt Disney Pictures. 77 mins.

The Return of Jafar, 1994d. [Video]. USA: Walt Disney Television Animation, DisneyToon Studios. 69 mins.

Return to Never Land, 2002b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Television Animation, DisneyToon Studios, Walt Disney Animation Australia, Walt Disney Animation Canada, Walt Disney Pictures. 72 mins.

Return to Snowy River, 1988a. [Film]. USA: Burrowes Film Group, Hoyts Distribution, Silver Screen Partners III, Walt Disney Pictures. 99 mins.

Roadside Romeo, 2008i. [Film]. India/USA: Yash Raj Films, The Walt Disney Company. 93 mins.

Robin Hood, 1973a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 83 mins.

The Rocketeer, 1991c. [Film]. USA: Silver Screen Partners IV, Walt Disney Pictures, Gordon Company, Dark Horse Entertainment. 108 mins.

Rocketman, 1997g. [Film]. USA: Caravan Pictures, Gold/Miller Productions, Roger Birnbaum Productions, Walt Disney Pictures. 95 mins.

Rocky, 1976c. [Film]. USA: Chartoff-Winkler Productions. 120 mins.

Rogue One: A Star Wars Story, 2016k. [Film]. USA/UK: Allison Shearmur Productions, Lucasfilm. 133 mins.

Roving Mars, 2006d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Lockheed Martin, NASA, K/M, White Mountain Films, The Kennedy/Marshall Company. 40 mins.

Run, Cougar, Run, 1972f. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 87 mins.

Sacred Planet, 2004g. [Film]. USA: Living Films, The Sacred Planet Project Ltd., Walt Disney Pictures. 47 mins.

Saludos Amigos, 1942b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 42 mins.

The Santa Clause, 1994e. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Hollywood Pictures, Outlaw Productions. 97 mins.

Savage Sam, 1963a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 103 mins.

Saving Mr. Banks, 2013g. [Film]. USA/UK/Australia: Walt Disney Pictures, Ruby Films, Essential Media & Entertainment, BBC Films, Hopscotch Features. 125 mins.

The Secret Life of Pets, 2016l. [Film]. Japan/USA: Universal Pictures, Illumination Entertainment, Dentsu, Fuji Television Network. 87 mins.

Secretariat, 2010e. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Fast Track Productions, Mayhem Pictures. 123 mins.

The Shaggy Dog, 1959a. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 104 mins.

The Shaggy Dog, 2006e. [Film]. USA: Boxing Cat Films, Mandeville Films, Walt Disney Pictures. 98 mins.

Shrek, 2001b. [Film]. USA: DreamWorks Animation, PDI/DreamWorks, DreamWorks Pictures. 90 mins.

The Sign of Zorro, 1958b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 91 mins.

The Skeleton Dance, 1929. [Theatrical Short]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 6 mins.

Sky High, 2005e. [Film]. USA: Gunn Films, Max Stronghold Productions Inc., Walt Disney Pictures. 100 mins.

Sleeping Beauty, 1959b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 75 mins.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 83 mins.

Something Wicked This Way Comes, 1983b. [Film]. USA: Bryna Productions, Walt Disney Productions. 95 mins.

Son of Flubber, 1963b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 100 mins.

Song of the South, 1946b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 94 mins.

Spider-Man: Homecoming, 2017f. [Film]. USA: Columbia Pictues, LSC Film Corporation, Marvel Entertainment, Marvel Studios, Pascal Pictures. 133 mins.

Splash, 1984b. [Film]. USA: Touchstone Pictures. 111 mins.

Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith, 2005f. [Film]. USA: Lucasfilm. 140 mins.

Star Wars: The Clone Wars, 2008j. [Film]. USA: Lucasfilm Animation, Lucasfilm. 98 mins.

Star Wars: The Clone Wars, 2008-2014. [Television Series]. USA: CGCG/Cartoon Network/Disney-ABC Domestic Television/Lucasfilm Animation Singapore/Lucasfilm Animation/Lucasfilm/Walt Disney

Television for Cartoon Network/Netflix tx. Cartoon Network 03/10/2008-02/03/2013, Netflix 15/02/2014-07/03/2014. 121 x 23 mins.

Star Wars: The Force Awakens, 2015k. [Film]. USA: Bad Robot, Lucasfilm, Truenorth Productions. 135 mins.

Steamboat Willie, 1928. [Theatrical Short]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 8 mins.

The Straight Story, 1999e. [Film]. USA: Asymmetrical Productions, Canal+, Channel Four Films, CiBy 2000, Les Films Alain Sarde, StudioCanal, The Picture Factory, Walt Disney Pictures. 112 mins.

Strange Magic, 2015l. [Film]. USA: Filmbox, Industrial Light & Magic, Lucasfilm Animation, Lucasfilm Animation Singapore, Touchstone Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures. 99 mins.

Summer Magic, 1963c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 110 mins.

Super Buddies, 2013h. [Video]. USA: Key Pix Productions. 81 mins.

Supernatural, 2005-. [Television Series]. USA: Kripke Enterprises/Supernatural Films/Wonderland Sound and Vision/Warner Bros. Television for The WB/The CW tx. The WB 13/09/2005-2006; The CW 28/09/2006-. 45 mins.

The Sword and the Rose, 1953c. [Film]. UK/USA: Walt Disney Productions. 92 mins.

Tarzan, 1999f. [Film]. USA: Edgar Rice Burroughs Inc., Walt Disney Feature Animation, Walt Disney Pictures. 88 mins.

Teacher's Pet, 2000c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Walt Disney Television Animation, Toon City Animation. 74 mins.

Tex, 1982d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 103 mins.

That Darn Cat, 1997h. [Film]. USA: Robert Simonds Productions, Walt Disney Pictures. 89 mins.

That Darn Cat!, 1965b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 116 mins.

Thor, 2011d. [Film]. USA: Marvel Entertainment, Marvel Studios, Paramount Pictures. 115 mins.

Thor: The Dark World, 2013i. [Film]. USA: Marvel Studios. 112 mins.

The Three Caballeros, 1944. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 71 mins.

Three Little Pigs, 1933. [Theatrical Short]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 9 mins.

The Three Musketeers, 1993f. [Film]. Austria/UK/USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Caravan Pictures, Wolfgang Odelga Filmproduktion GmbH, Vienna Film Financing Fund, One for All Productions. 105 mins.

A Tiger Walks, 1964f. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 91 mins.

The Tigger Movie, 2000d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Television Animation, DisneyToon Studios. 77 mins.

Tinker Bell, 2008k. [Film]. USA: DisneyToon Studios, Prana Animation Studios, Prana Studios. 78 mins.

Titanic, 1997i. [Film]. USA: Twentieth Century Fox, Paramount Pictures, Lightstorm Entertainment. 194 mins.

Tomorrowland, 2015m. [Film]. USA/Spain: Babieka, Walt Disney Pictures. 130 mins.

Tonka, 1958c. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 97 mins.

Toy Story, 1995g. [Film]. USA: Pixar Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 81 mins.

Toy Story 3, 2010f. [Film]. USA: Pixar Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 103 mins.

Transformers, 2007f. [Film]. USA: Di Bonaventura Pictures, DreamWorks, Hasbro, Paramount Pictures. 144 mins.

Treasure Island, 1950b. [Film]. UK/USA: Walt Disney Productions. 96 mins.

Trenchcoat, 1983c. [Film]. USA: Buena Vista. 91 mins.

Tron, 1982e. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 96 mins.

Tron: Legacy, 2010g. [Film]. USA: LivePlanet, Prana Studios, Sean Bailey Productions, Walt Disney Pictures. 125 mins.

Un indien dans la ville, 1994f. [Film]. France: Canal+, Ice Films, Procirep, TF1 Films Production, Touchstone Pictures. 90 mins.

Underdog, 2007g. [Film]. USA: Classic Media, Have No Fear Productions, Maverick Film Company, Spyglass Entertainment, Walt Disney Pictures. 84 mins.

Up, 2009g. [Film]. USA: Pixar Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 96 mins.

Valiant, 2005g. [Film]. UK/USA: Vanguard Animation, Ealing Studios, UK Film Council, Take Film Partnerships, Odyssey Entertainment, Walt Disney Pictures. 76 mins.

Victory Through Air Power, 1943. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 70 mins.

Walt & El Grupo, 2008l. [Film]. USA: Theodore Thomas Productions. 106 mins.

Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color, 1961-1969. [Television Series]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures for NBC tx. NBC 24/09/1961-23/03/1969. 200 x 60 mins.

Waltz with Bashir, 2008m. [Film]. Israel/France/Germany/USA/Finland/Switzerland/Belgium/Australia: Bridgit Folman Film Gang, Les Films d'Ici, Razor Film Produktion GmbH, Arte France, ITVS International, Noga Communication - Channel 8, New Israeli Foundation for Cinema and Television, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, Israel Film Fund, Hot Telecommunications, YLE Teema, TSR, RTBF, SBS. 90 mins.

The Watcher in the Woods, 1980b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 84 mins.

Watership Down, 1978b. [Film]. UK: Nepenthe Productions, Watership Productions. 101 mins.

Where the Toys Come From, 1984c. [Video]. USA: Theodore Thomas Productions, Walt Disney Productions. 58 mins.

White Fang, 1991d. [Film]. USA: Silver Screen Partners IV, Hybrid Productions Inc., Walt Disney Pictures. 107 mins.

White Wilderness, 1958d. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 72 mins.

Who Framed Roger Rabbit, 1988b. [Film]. USA: Amblin Entertainment, Silver Screen Partners III, Touchstone Pictures. 104 mins.

The Wild, 2006f. [Film]. USA: C.O.R.E. Feature Animation, Contrafilm, Hoytyboy Pictures, Nigel Productions, Sir Zip Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 82 mins.

Wings of Life, 2011e. [Film]. USA/Panama/Mexico: Blacklight Films. 81 mins.

Winnie the Pooh, 2011f. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Walt Disney Animation Studios. 63 mins.

Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day, 1968c. [Theatrical Short]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 25 mins.

Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree, 1966b. [Theatrical Short]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 25 mins.

Winnie the Pooh and Tigger Too, 1974b. [Theatrical Short]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 25 mins.

The Wizard of Oz, 1939. [Film]. USA: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 102 mins.

The World's Greatest Athlete, 1973b. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. 93 mins.

Wreck-It Ralph, 2012h. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios. 101 mins.

X Games 3D: The Movie, 2009h. [Film]. USA: ESPN Films, Hi-Ground Media, MRB Productions, Peligro Pictures. 92 mins.

The Young Black Stallion, 2003h. [Film]. USA: The Kennedy/Marshall Company, Moonlighting, Walt Disney Pictures. 50 mins.

Zootopia, 2016m. [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures. 108 mins.

Zorro, 1957-1959. [Television Series]. USA: Walt Disney Productions for ABC tx. ABC 10/10/1957-28/09/1959. 78 x 30 mins.

Appendix 1a: Walt Disney Company Structure

Walt Disney Company

- **Media Networks**
  - **Cable Networks**
    - ESPN
    - Freeform
    - International Channels
    - Disney Channels (US)
      - Disney Channel
      - Disney Junior
      - Disney XD
      - Disney Cinemagic & Disney Cinema
      - Radio Disney
  - **Broadcasting**
    - ABC Television Network
    - US Television Stations

- **Parks and Resorts**
  - Disney Cruise Line
  - Walt Disney World Resort
    - Magic Kingdom
    - Epcot
    - Disney's Hollywood Studios
    - Disney's Animal Kingdom
  - Walt Disney Imagineering
  - Disney Vacation Club
  - Disneyland Resort
    - Disneyland
    - Disney California Adventure
  - Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa
  - Disneyland Paris
    - Disneyland Park
    - Walt Disney Studios Park
  - Adventures by Disney
  - Hong Kong Disneyland Resort
    - Hong Kong Disneyland
  - Shanghai Disney Resort
    - Shangai Disneyland
  - Tokyo Disney Resort
    - Tokyo Disneyland
    - Tokyo DisneySea

- **Studio Entertainment**
  - Walt Disney Studios — See Appendix 1b
  - Disney Theatrical Group
  - Disney Music Group
    - Walt Disney Records
    - Hollywood Records
    - Disney Music Publishing
    - Buena Vista Concerts

- **Consumer Products & Interactive Media**
  - Merchandise Licensing
  - Disney Stores
  - Games Licensing
  - Publishing

Appendix 1b: Walt Disney Studios Structure

The Walt Disney Studios

1923 > 1929 > 1953 > 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016	

1923 Disney Brothers Cartoon Studios > 1929 Walt Disney Productions > 1983 **Walt Disney Pictures** (including > 1986 Walt Disney Feature Animation > 2006 **Walt Disney Animation Studios**)

1953 Buena Vista Distribution Company > 1986 Buena Vista Pictures Distribution > 2007 Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures

1984 **Touchstone Pictures** (+Distributor from 2008)

1989 **Hollywood Pictures** (Ceased production in 2007)

1993 **Miramax Films** (Sold in 2010)

1993 **Dimension Films** (Ceased production in 2006)

1995 Pixar Animation Studios

2006 **Pixar Animation Studios**

2004 The Muppets Studio > 2014 studio moved to Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media Labs

2009 **Disneynature**

2009 DreamWorks/Touchstone

2009 **Marvel Studios**

2012 **Lucasfilm**

Colour Key:

Studios/Banners created by Disney

Distributor created by Disney

Studios/Banners acquired by Disney

Co-production/distribution deals with Disney

This chart shows the subsidiary production studios and the distribution company that were once or are currently part of the Walt Disney Studios, which itself is part of the Studio Entertainment segment of the Walt Disney Company (see Appendix 1a).

Source for Appendix 1a & 1b: Author's own research.

Appendix 2a: Output Survey: Films Used in Census

The following 390 films were selected for the Disney Film Census based on the criteria illustrated in Figure 2 and discussed in section 3.2. The number in the # column relates to its chronological appearance in the census, based on the earliest release date (not necessarily the same as the general US release date. The film titles listed are the titles used on the film's initial US release.

#	Film	General US Release
1	Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs	21/12/1937
2	Pinocchio	07/02/1940
3	Fantasia	13/11/1940
4	The Reluctant Dragon	20/06/1941
5	Dumbo	23/10/1941
6	Bambi	13/08/1942
7	Saludos Amigos	06/02/1943
8	Victory Through Air Power	17/07/1943
9	The Three Caballeros	03/02/1945
10	Make Mine Music	15/08/1946
11	Song of the South	12/11/1946
12	Fun & Fancy Free	27/09/1947
13	Melody Time	27/05/1948
14	So Dear to My Heart	19/01/1949
15	The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad	05/10/1949
16	Cinderella	15/02/1950
17	Treasure Island	19/07/1950
18	Alice in Wonderland	26/07/1951
19	The Story of Robin Hood and His Merrie Men	26/06/1952
20	Peter Pan	05/02/1953
21	The Sword and the Rose	23/07/1953
22	Rob Roy: the Highland Rogue	04/02/1954
23	The Living Desert	10/11/1953
24	The Vanishing Prairie	16/08/1954
25	20,000 Leagues Under the Sea	23/12/1954
26	Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier	25/05/1955
27	Lady and the Tramp	22/06/1955
28	The African Lion	14/09/1955
29	The Littlest Outlaw	22/12/1955
30	The Great Locomotive Chase	08/06/1956
31	Davy Crockett and the River Pirates	18/07/1956
32	Secrets of Life	06/11/1956
33	Westward Ho, the Wagons!	20/12/1956
34	Johnny Tremain	19/06/1957
35	Perri	28/08/1957
36	Old Yeller	25/12/1957
37	The Light in the Forest	08/07/1958
38	White Wilderness	12/08/1958
39	The Sign of Zorro	11/06/1960
40	Tonka	25/12/1958
41	Sleeping Beauty	29/01/1959
42	The Shaggy Dog	19/03/1959
43	Darby O'Gill and the Little People	26/06/1959
44	Third Man on the Mountain	10/11/1959
45	Jungle Cat	10/08/1960
46	Toby Tyler, or Ten Weeks with a Circus	21/01/1960
47	Kidnapped	24/02/1960
48	Pollyanna	19/05/1960
49	Ten Who Dared	18/10/1960
50	Swiss Family Robinson	21/12/1960
51	One Hundred and One Dalmatians	25/01/1961
52	The Absent-Minded Professor	16/03/1961

53	The Parent Trap	21/06/1961		88	Blackbeard's Ghost	08/02/1968
54	Nikki, Wild Dog of the North	12/07/1961		89	The One and Only, Genuine, Original Family Band	21/03/1968
55	Greyfriars Bobby: The True Story of a Dog	17/07/1961		90	Never a Dull Moment	26/06/1968
56	Babes in Toyland	14/12/1961		91	The Horse in the Gray Flannel Suit	20/12/1968
57	Moon Pilot	09/02/1962		92	The Love Bug	13/03/1969
58	Bon Voyage!	17/05/1962		93	Smith!	21/03/1969
59	Big Red	06/06/1962		94	Rascal	11/06/1969
60	Almost Angels	26/09/1962		95	The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes	31/12/1969
61	The Legend of Lobo	07/11/1962		96	King of the Grizzlies	11/02/1970
62	In Search of the Castaways	19/12/1962		97	The Boatniks	01/07/1970
63	Son of Flubber	18/01/1963		98	The Wild Country	20/01/1971
64	Miracle of the White Stallions	29/03/1963		99	The Aristocats	24/12/1970
65	Savage Sam	01/06/1963		100	The Barefoot Executive	17/03/1971
66	Summer Magic	07/07/1963		101	Scandalous John	22/06/1971
67	The Incredible Journey	30/10/1963		102	The Million Dollar Duck	30/06/1971
68	The Three Lives of Thomasina	06/06/1964		103	Bedknobs and Broomsticks	13/12/1971
69	The Sword in the Stone	25/12/1963		104	The Biscuit Eater	22/03/1972
70	The Misadventures of Merlin Jones	22/01/1964		105	Napoleon and Samantha	05/07/1972
71	A Tiger Walks	12/03/1964		106	Now You See Him, Now You Don't	12/07/1972
72	The Moon-Spinners	02/07/1964		107	Run, Cougar, Run	18/10/1972
73	Mary Poppins	29/08/1964		108	Snowball Express	20/12/1972
74	Emil and the Detectives	18/12/1964		109	The World's Greatest Athlete	01/02/1973
75	Those Calloways	28/01/1965		110	Charley and the Angel	23/03/1973
76	The Monkey's Uncle	23/06/1965		111	One Little Indian	20/06/1973
77	That Darn Cat!	02/12/1965		112	Robin Hood	08/11/1973
78	The Ugly Dachshund	04/02/1966		113	Superdad	18/01/1974
79	Lt. Robin Crusoe, U.S.N.	29/06/1966		114	Herbie Rides Again	06/06/1974
80	Follow Me, Boys!	01/12/1966		115	The Bears and I	31/07/1974
81	The Fighting Prince of Donegal	01/10/1966		116	The Castaway Cowboy	07/08/1974
82	Monkeys, Go Home!	02/02/1967		117	The Island at the Top of the World	20/12/1974
83	The Adventures of Bullwhip Griffin	03/03/1967		118	The Strongest Man in the World	06/02/1975
84	The Happiest Millionaire	23/06/1967		119	Escape to Witch Mountain	21/03/1975
85	The Gnome-Mobile	12/07/1967		120	The Apple Dumpling Gang	04/07/1975
86	The Jungle Book	18/10/1967		121	One of Our Dinosaurs Is Missing	09/07/1975
87	Charlie, the Lonesome Cougar	18/10/1967		122	The Best of Walt Disney's True-Life Adventures	08/10/1975

123	Ride a Wild Pony	26/03/1976		158	The Journey of Natty Gann	27/09/1985
124	No Deposit, No Return	11/02/1976		159	One Magic Christmas	22/11/1985
125	The Littlest Horse Thieves	26/05/1976		160	The Great Mouse Detective	02/07/1986
126	Treasure of Matecumbe	09/07/1976		161	Flight of the Navigator	30/07/1986
127	Gus	07/07/1976		162	Benji the Hunted	19/06/1987
128	The Shaggy D.A.	18/12/1976		163	Return to Snowy River	15/04/1988
129	Freaky Friday	21/01/1977		164	Oliver & Company	18/11/1988
130	The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh	11/03/1977		165	Honey, I Shrunk the Kids	23/06/1989
131	The Rescuers	22/06/1977		166	Cheetah	18/08/1989
132	Herbie Goes to Monte Carlo	24/06/1977		167	The Little Mermaid	17/11/1989
133	Pete's Dragon	16/12/1977		168	Ducktales - The Movie: Treasure of the Lost Lamp	03/08/1990
134	Candleshoe	10/02/1978		169	Shipwrecked	01/03/1991
135	Return from Witch Mountain	10/03/1978		170	The Rescuers Down Under	16/11/1990
136	The Cat from Outer Space	30/06/1978		171	White Fang	18/01/1991
137	Hot Lead and Cold Feet	05/07/1978		172	Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken	24/05/1991
138	The North Avenue Irregulars	09/02/1979		173	The Rocketeer	21/06/1991
139	The Apple Dumpling Gang Rides Again	27/06/1979		174	Beauty and the Beast	22/11/1991
140	Unidentified Flying Oddball	26/07/1979		175	Newsies	10/04/1992
141	The Black Hole	20/12/1979		176	Honey I Blew Up the Kid	17/07/1992
142	Midnight Madness	08/02/1980		177	The Mighty Ducks	02/10/1992
143	The Watcher in the Woods	07/10/1981		178	Aladdin	25/11/1992
144	Herbie Goes Bananas	25/06/1980		179	The Muppet Christmas Carol	11/12/1992
145	The Last Flight of Noah's Ark	25/06/1980		180	Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey	12/02/1993
146	The Devil and Max Devlin	06/02/1981		181	A Far Off Place	12/03/1993
147	Amy	20/03/1981		182	The Adventures of Huck Finn	02/04/1993
148	Condorman	07/08/1981		183	Hocus Pocus	16/07/1993
149	The Fox and the Hound	10/07/1981		184	Cool Runnings	01/10/1993
150	Night Crossing	05/02/1982		185	The Three Musketeers	12/11/1993
151	TRON	09/07/1982		186	Iron Will	14/01/1994
152	Tex	24/09/1982		187	Blank Check	11/02/1994
153	Trenchcoat	11/03/1983		188	D2: The Mighty Ducks	25/03/1994
154	Something Wicked This Way Comes	29/04/1983		189	White Fang 2: Myth of the White Wolf	15/04/1994
155	Never Cry Wolf	07/10/1983		190	The Lion King	24/06/1994
156	Return to Oz	21/06/1985		191	Angels in the Outfield	15/07/1994
157	The Black Cauldron	24/07/1985		192	Squanto: A Warrior's Tale	28/10/1994

193	The Santa Clause	11/11/1994
194	The Jungle Book	25/12/1994
195	Heavyweights	17/02/1995
196	Man of the House	03/03/1995
197	Tall Tale	24/03/1995
198	A Goofy Movie	07/04/1995
199	Pocahontas	23/06/1995
200	Operation Dumbo Drop	28/07/1995
201	A Kid in King Arthur's Court	11/08/1995
202	The Big Green	29/09/1995
203	Frank and Ollie	20/10/1995
204	Toy Story	22/11/1995
205	Tom and Huck	22/12/1996
206	Muppet Treasure Island	16/02/1996
207	Homeward Bound II: Lost in San Francisco	08/03/1996
208	James and the Giant Peach	12/04/1996
209	The Hunchback of Notre Dame	21/06/1996
210	First Kid	30/08/1996
211	D3: The Mighty Ducks	04/10/1996
212	101 Dalmatians	27/11/1996
213	That Darn Cat	14/02/1997
214	Jungle 2 Jungle	07/03/1997
215	Hercules	27/06/1997
216	George of the Jungle	16/07/1997
217	Air Bud	11/08/1997
218	Rocketman	10/10/1997
219	Flubber	26/11/1997
220	Mr. Magoo	25/12/1997
221	Meet the Deedles	27/03/1998
222	Mulan	19/06/1998
223	The Parent Trap	29/07/1998
224	I'll Be Home for Christmas	13/11/1998
225	A Bug's Life	25/11/1998
226	Mighty Joe Young	25/12/1998
227	My Favorite Martian	12/02/1999

228	Doug's 1st Movie	26/03/1999
229	Endurance	14/05/1999
230	Tarzan	18/06/1999
231	Inspector Gadget	23/07/1999
232	The Hand Behind the Mouse: The Ub Iwerks Story	08/10/1999
233	The Straight Story	15/10/1999
234	Toy Story 2	24/11/1999
235	Fantasia/2000	16/06/2000
236	The Tigger Movie	11/02/2000
237	Whispers: An Elephant's Tale	10/03/2000
238	Dinosaur	19/05/2000
239	The Kid	07/07/2000
240	Remember the Titans	29/09/2000
241	102 Dalmatians	22/11/2000
242	The Emperor's New Groove	15/12/2000
243	Recess: School's Out	16/02/2001
244	Atlantis: The Lost Empire	15/06/2001
245	The Princess Diaries	03/08/2001
246	Max Keeble's Big Move	05/10/2001
247	Monsters, Inc.	02/11/2001
248	Snow Dogs	18/01/2002
249	Return to Never Land	15/02/2002
250	The Rookie	29/03/2002
251	Lilo & Stitch	21/06/2002
252	The Country Bears	26/07/2002
253	Tuck Everlasting	11/10/2002
254	The Santa Clause 2	01/11/2002
255	Treasure Planet	27/11/2002
256	The Jungle Book 2	14/02/2003
257	Piglet's Big Movie	21/03/2003
258	Ghosts of the Abyss	11/04/2003
259	Holes	18/04/2003
260	The Lizzie McGuire Movie	02/05/2003
261	Finding Nemo	30/05/2003
262	Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl	09/07/2003

263	Freaky Friday	06/08/2003		297	Meet the Robinsons	30/03/2007
264	Brother Bear	01/11/2003		298	Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End	25/05/2007
265	The Haunted Mansion	26/11/2003		299	Ratatouille	29/06/2007
266	The Young Black Stallion	25/12/2003		300	Underdog	03/08/2007
267	Teacher's Pet	16/01/2004		301	The Game Plan	28/09/2007
268	Miracle	06/02/2004		302	Earth	22/04/2009
269	Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen	20/02/2004		303	Enchanted	21/11/2007
270	Home on the Range	02/04/2004		304	National Treasure: Book of Secrets	21/12/2007
271	Sacred Planet	22/04/2004		305	Hannah Montana & Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert	01/02/2008
272	America's Heart & Soul	02/07/2004		306	College Road Trip	07/03/2008
273	Around the World in 80 Days	16/06/2004		307	Walt & El Grupo	11/09/2009
274	The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement	11/08/2004		308	The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian	16/05/2008
275	The Incredibles	05/11/2004		309	WALL·E	27/06/2008
276	National Treasure	19/11/2004		310	Tinker Bell	19/09/2008
277	Aliens of the Deep	28/01/2005		311	Beverly Hills Chihuahua	03/10/2008
278	Pooh's Heffalump Movie	11/02/2005		312	Morning Light	17/10/2008
279	The Pacifier	04/03/2005		313	High School Musical 3: Senior Year	24/10/2008
280	Ice Princess	18/03/2005		314	Roadside Romeo	24/10/2008
281	Valiant	19/08/2005		315	Bolt	21/11/2008
282	Herbie Fully Loaded	22/06/2005		316	The Crimson Wing: Mystery of the Flamingos	19/10/2009
283	Sky High	29/07/2005		317	Bedtime Stories	25/12/2008
284	The Greatest Game Ever Played	30/09/2005		318	Jonas Brothers: The 3D Concert Experience	27/02/2009
285	Chicken Little	04/11/2005		319	Race to Witch Mountain	13/03/2009
286	The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	09/12/2005		320	Hannah Montana: The Movie	10/04/2009
287	Glory Road	13/01/2006		321	Up	29/05/2009
288	Roving Mars	27/01/2006		322	The Boys: The Sherman Brothers' Story	22/05/2009
289	Eight Below	17/02/2006		323	G-Force	24/07/2009
290	The Shaggy Dog	10/03/2006		324	X Games 3D: The Movie	21/08/2009
291	The Wild	14/04/2006		325	Tinker Bell and the Lost Treasure	16/10/2009
292	Cars	09/06/2006		326	Waking Sleeping Beauty	26/03/2010
293	Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	07/07/2006		327	A Christmas Carol	06/11/2009
294	Invincible	25/08/2006		328	The Princess and the Frog	11/12/2009
295	The Santa Clause 3: The Escape Clause	03/11/2006		329	Old Dogs	25/11/2009
296	Bridge to Terabithia	16/02/2007		330	Oceans	22/04/2010

331	Alice in Wonderland	05/03/2010
332	Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time	28/05/2010
333	Toy Story 3	18/06/2010
334	The Sorcerer's Apprentice	14/07/2010
335	Tinker Bell and the Great Fairy Rescue	03/09/2010
336	Secretariat	08/10/2010
337	Tangled	24/11/2010
338	TRON: Legacy	17/12/2010
339	Once Upon a Warrior	21/01/2011
340	Mars Needs Moms	11/03/2011
341	Winnie the Pooh	15/07/2011
342	Zokkomon	22/04/2011
343	African Cats	22/04/2011
344	Prom	29/04/2011
345	Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides	20/05/2011
346	Cars 2	24/06/2011
347	The Muppets	23/11/2011
348	John Carter	09/03/2012
349	Chimpanzee	20/04/2012
350	The Avengers	04/05/2012
351	Arjun: The Warrior Prince	25/05/2012
352	Brave	22/06/2012
353	The Odd Life of Timothy Green	15/08/2012
354	Secret of the Wings	31/08/2012
355	Barfi!	14/09/2012
356	Frankenweenie	05/10/2012
357	Wreck-It Ralph	02/09/2012
358	Oz the Great and Powerful	08/03/2013
359	Wings of Life	05/04/2013
360	Iron Man 3	03/05/2013
361	Monsters University	21/06/2013
362	The Lone Ranger	03/07/2013
363	Planes	09/08/2013
364	Saving Mr. Banks	20/12/2013
365	Thor: The Dark World	13/11/2013

366	Frozen	27/11/2013
367	The Pirate Fairy	28/02/2014
368	Captain America: The Winter Soldier	04/04/2014
369	Muppets Most Wanted	21/03/2014
370	Bears	18/04/2014
371	Million Dollar Arm	16/05/2014
372	Maleficent	30/05/2014
373	Planes: Fire & Rescue	18/07/2014
374	Guardians of the Galaxy	01/08/2014
375	Khoobsurat	19/09/2014
376	Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day	10/10/2014
377	Big Hero 6	07/11/2014
378	Tinker Bell and the Legend of the NeverBeast	30/01/2015
379	Into the Woods	25/12/2014
380	Strange Magic	23/01/2015
381	McFarland, USA	20/02/2015
382	Cinderella	13/03/2015
383	Monkey Kingdom	17/04/2015
384	Avengers: Age of Ultron	01/05/2015
385	Tomorrowland	22/05/2015
386	Inside Out	19/06/2015
387	ABCD 2	19/09/2015
388	Ant-Man	17/07/2015
389	The Good Dinosaur	25/11/2015
390	Star Wars: The Force Awakens	18/12/2015

Source for Appendix 2a: Compiled by author using *Disney A to Z: The Official Encyclopedia* (Smith, 2016) and its online equivalent (https://d23.com/disney-a-to-z/), and IMDb.com, along with several other online and offline resources for verification purposes.

Appendix 2b: Output Survey: 2015 Case Study

Film	US Release	UK Release	Home media, CDs and books released (excluding children's books)
Into the Woods	25/12/2014	09/01/2015	Blu-ray, DVD, Digital (Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment) Soundtrack album + 2-Disc Deluxe Edition (Walt Disney Records) Vocal and Piano Selections from the Disney Movie (Hal Leonard Corporation) books
Big Hero 6	23/10/2014	30/01/2015	3D Blu-ray, DVD, Digital (Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment) Soundtrack album (Walt Disney Records) The Art of Big Hero 6 (Chronicle Books) Big Hero 6 Vols 1 & 2 (Yen Press) anime adaptations
Strange Magic	23/01/2015	21/08/2015	DVD, Digital (Touchstone Home Entertainment) US only Soundtrack album (Walt Disney Records) CD US only
McFarland, USA	09/02/2015	25/09/2015	Blu-ray, DVD, Digital (Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment) US only Soundtrack album (Walt Disney Records) CD US only
Cinderella	13/02/2015	27/03/2015	Blu-ray, DVD, Digital (Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment) Soundtrack album (Walt Disney Records) A Wish Your Heart Makes (Disney Editions)
Monkey Kingdom	24/03/2015	n/a	Blu-ray, DVD, Digital (Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment) US only
Avengers: Age of Ultron	13/04/2015	23/04/2015	3D Blu-ray, DVD, Digital (Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment) + Avengers Assemble double-pack Soundtrack album (Hollywood Records) Marvel's Avengers: Age of Ultron: The Art of the Movie (Marvel) The Road to Marvel's Avengers: Age of Ultron: The Art of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (Marvel)
Tomorrowland	09/05/2015	22/05/2015	Blu-ray, DVD, Digital (Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment) Soundtrack album (Walt Disney Records) CD US only Before Tomorrowland (Disney Press) novel

Inside Out	18/05/2015	21/06/2015	3D Blu-ray, DVD, Digital (Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment) Soundtrack album (Walt Disney Records) CD US only The Art of Inside Out (Chronicle Books)
ABCD 2	19/06/2015 (Limited)	n/a	Blu-ray, DVD (Big Home Video/Reliance Home Video) India only Soundtrack album (Zee Music) India only
Ant-Man	17/07/2015	08/07/2015	3D Blu-ray, DVD, Digital (Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment) Soundtrack album (Hollywood Records) Marvel's Ant-Man: The Art of the Movie (Marvel)
The Good Dinosaur	25/11/2015	27/11/2015	3D Blu-ray, DVD, Digital (Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment) Soundtrack album (Walt Disney Records) CD US only The Art of The Good Dinosaur (Chronicle Books)
Star Wars: The Force Awakens	16/12/2015	17/12/2015	Blu-ray, DVD, Digital (Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment) Soundtrack album + Deluxe Version + Two-LP Hologram Vinyl (Walt Disney Records) The Art of Star Wars: The Force Awakens (Harry N. Abrams)

Source for Appendix 2b: Compiled by author.

Appendix 3a: Online Questionnaire: Distribution History

Date	Activity	Responses (running total)
22/01/16	*Pilot survey launched and circulated via Facebook to 20 friends for feedback regarding clarity, ease of use, choice of answers, spelling, etc.* https://leeds.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/disney-research-pilot-survey	*0*
27/01/16	*Pilot survey closes*	*18*
28/01/16	'PhD Survey: Disney & Adult Audiences' published online: https://leeds.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/disney-survey	0
01/02/16	Survey link circulated on Facebook among those friends who took pilot survey	0
03/02/16	Survey circulated via personal social media, which is shared and retweeted by my friends/followers: Facebook (228 friends): https://www.facebook.com/james.mason.399 Twitter (65 followers): https://twitter.com/JamesDoesDisney/status/694838124950720513 Also posted to several Facebook groups including Leeds University Postgraduate Society, and LUU LGBT Society.	251
04/02/16	Survey published on Call For Participants website: https://www.callforparticipants.com/study/TJXP1/disney-adult-audiences	450
05/02/16	Survey published in Mumsnet NFP Surveys topic thread: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/surveys_students_non_profits_and_start_ups/2564533-PhD-Research-on-Disney-films-adult-audiences	510
09/02/16	Twitter link retweeted by @PeopleofLeeds (9,000 followers)	562
10/02/16	Survey link published on Reddit: https://www.reddit.com/r/movies/ and https://www.reddit.com/r/SampleSize/	597
17/02/16	News item published on School website: http://media.leeds.ac.uk/news/what-are-your-views-on-disney-films/	659
18/02/16	Survey circulated via Screenwriting Research Network & BAFTSS mailing lists	753

19/02/16	Survey circulated via FANSTUDIES and MECCSA mailing lists, Reel Solutions website (and Twitter): http://www.reelsolutions.co.uk/index.php/2016/02/do-you-love-or-loathe-disney-films/	1,645
22/02/16	Survey circulated via Artynet (University of Leeds) mailing list	2,210
25/02/16	Survey published on IMDb 'The Watercooler' Message Board: http://www.imdb.com/board/bd0000101/thread/254120570	2,314
26/02/16	Interview published on State of The Arts: http://www.thestateofthearts.co.uk/features/interview-with-phd-researcher-james-mason/	2,322
18/05/16	Survey circulated again: Screenwriting Research Network, BAFTSS, FANSTUDIES, MECCSA & Artynet mailing lists	2,622
22/06/16	Reposted survey on Reddit and Mumsnet	3,162
04/07/16	Another push on social media	3,283
26/07/16	Last push on social media	3,436
31/07/16	Survey closes	3,524

Appendix 3b: Online Questionnaire: Questions

Appendix 3b has been compiled from a PDF version of the online questionnaire, the results of which follow in Appendix 3c

Page 1: Participant Information Page

The following survey is part of a PhD research project investigating adult audiences and their feelings about Disney films. Disney is one of the biggest entertainment producers in the world and plays a part in the lives of millions of people. Previous research has been carried out into the different ways that audiences in general interact with, and are affected by, Disney's wide-ranging activities. However, very little attention has been paid to the ways in which adult audiences experience and feel about Disney films.

So, whatever you think of Disney and their films, your time completing this survey will be very much appreciated.

The research is being led by James Mason, a PhD Researcher at the University of Leeds. If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please feel free to email him at **csjrm@leeds.ac.uk**

The questionnaire should take you no longer than 15 minutes to complete. You may withdraw from participating at any point. You will not be required to disclose any identifying information, and all reasonable steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality (find out more on the next page).

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Page 2: Consent Agreement

I have read and understood the information given in the Participant Information Page, and have had the opportunity to ask the researcher any questions (via email).

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time by closing the webpage.

I understand that the data I provide will be kept safe and confidential, and that on completion of the study my data will be anonymised. This will be done before any presentation or publication of my data.

I understand that access to data will be limited to James Mason in his PhD research. I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study may be looked at by James' PhD supervisors and examiners, but my confidentiality will remain throughout.

I understand that my data will be stored for a period of 3 years before being destroyed.

This PhD research has been granted ethical approval by the Ethical Review Committee at the University of Leeds.

1. I am 18 or over, I have read and understood the Consent Agreement, and I hereby fully and freely consent to my participation in this study. ✷ *Required*

Page 3: What is a Disney film?

2. What does the term **Disney film** mean to you? Select as many options as you like.
   ✱ *Required*

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

☐ Entertainment	☐ Education	☐ Simple
☐ Complex	☐ Boring	☐ Exciting
☐ Innocent	☐ Corrupting	☐ Pleasure
☐ Nostalgia	☐ Original	☐ Predictable
☐ Good quality	☐ Poor quality	☐ Other

2.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

[   ]

3. Which of the following **genres** would you normally associate with Disney films?
   Select as many options as you like. ✱ *Required*

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

☐ Action	☐ Adventure	☐ Animation
☐ Biopic	☐ Comedy	☐ Crime
☐ Documentary	☐ Drama	☐ Family
☐ Fantasy	☐ Horror	☐ Music
☐ Romance	☐ Sci-Fi	☐ Thriller
☐ War	☐ Western	☐ Other

3.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

[   ]

4. Who do you think are the **target audiences** for Disney films? Select as many
   options as you like. ✱ *Required*

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

☐ Children under 12	☐ Teenagers	☐ Parents
☐ Adults	☐ Men	☐ Women
☐ Boys	☐ Girls	☐ Families
☐ All of the above	☐ Other	

4.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

[   ]

Page 4: Disney films and you

5. Which of the following would **influence** your decision to watch a Disney film? Select as many options as you like. ❋ *Required*

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

☐ Friends   ☐ Partner   ☐ Children

☐ Film director   ☐ Actor(s) in the film   ☐ The Disney name

☐ Genre of the film   ☐ Soundtrack/music   ☐ Reviews by critics

☐ Familiarity with the story   ☐ Trailer, advert or poster   ☐ Other

5.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

6. What is your **experience** of watching Disney films? Select as many options as you need. ❋ *Required*

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

☐ I have never (knowingly) watched a Disney film

☐ I watched Disney films as a child

☐ I look forward to watching new Disney films

☐ I like to watch classic Disney films

☐ I will watch Disney films, but I don't seek them out

☐ I only watch Disney films because my partner watches them

☐ I only watch Disney films with my children/family

☐ Other

6.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

7. Which of the following have you done **as an adult**? Select as many options as you like. ✳ *Required*

Please select at least 1 answer(s).
- ☐ Taken children to the cinema to watch a Disney film
- ☐ Watched a Disney film at the cinema without children
- ☐ Bought Disney films on video/DVD/blu-ray for my children
- ☐ Bought Disney films on video/DVD/blu-ray for myself/partner
- ☐ Bought a Disney film soundtrack on CD/download for my children
- ☐ Bought a Disney film soundtrack on CD/download for myself/partner
- ☐ Watched Disney films on Sky Movies Disney or Disney Channel
- ☐ Subscribed to the DisneyLife streaming service
- ☐ Participated in online fan site discussion of Disney films
- ☐ Created or shared fan fiction, cartoons or artwork relating to Disney films
- ☐ Completed an online quiz relating to Disney films (not including this one!)
- ☐ None of the above

Page 5: Enjoying Disney films

8. Do you generally **enjoy** watching Disney films as an adult? ✳ *Required*

[   ]

8.a. Why **do** you enjoy watching Disney films as an adult?

Please select at least 1 answer(s).
- ☐ I just do / no reason
- ☐ I like animated films
- ☐ Nostalgia / reminds me of childhood
- ☐ It's a guilty pleasure
- ☐ They're easy to watch
- ☐ I won't be scared or upset by them
- ☐ I can watch them with my children
- ☐ They're usually well made
- ☐ Enjoying Disney films is no different to enjoying other films
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other

8.a.i. If you selected Other, please specify:

[   ]

8.b. Why **don't** you enjoy watching Disney films as an adult?

☐ I've grown up
☐ I've never liked Disney films
☐ I find them unsettling as an adult
☐ Better things to do with my time
☐ Disney is overly commercial
☐ They're for children
☐ Disney films aren't cool
☐ I don't identify with the characters/stories
☐ I prefer films made for adults
☐ I dislike the way they treat gender, sexuality, race, or disability
☐ Other

8.b.i. If you selected Other, please specify:

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9. How has your experience of Disney films **changed** since you were a child? ✳
Required

○ I enjoy watching Disney films MORE as an adult
○ I enjoy watching Disney films LESS as an adult
○ My feelings about Disney films haven't changed
○ I don't watch Disney films as an adult

9.a. Why do you enjoy watching Disney films **more** as an adult?

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9.b. Why do you enjoy watching Disney films **less** as an adult?

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Page 6: Disney studios, part 1

10. In the box below please list the **film studios** that you think, or know, are part of Walt Disney Studios.

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Page 7: Disney studios, part 2

11. Who do you think are the **target audiences** of the studios below?

	Pixar Animation	Marvel Studios	Lucasfilm	Disney Animation	Touchstone
Under 12s	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teenagers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Adults	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Men	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Women	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Boys	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Girls	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Families	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
All of the above	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Don't know	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

You will find more information about these studios at the end of the survey.

Page 8: Disney films in 2015

12. Which of the following Disney films have you seen?

	If you **have** seen the film, where did you watch it?	If you **have** seen the film, how would you rate it?	If you **have not** seen the film, would you watch it?
Into the Woods	n/a	n/a	n/a
Big Hero 6	n/a	n/a	n/a
Strange Magic	n/a	n/a	n/a
McFarland, USA	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cinderella	n/a	n/a	n/a
Avengers: Age of Ultron	n/a	n/a	n/a
Tomorrowland	n/a	n/a	n/a
Inside Out	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ant-Man	n/a	n/a	n/a
The Good Dinosaur	n/a	n/a	n/a
Star Wars: The Force Awakens	n/a	n/a	n/a

All of these films were released by Disney in the UK in 2015.

Page 9: General film viewing habits

13. How do you feel about watching films in general? Select as many as you need. ✳
Required

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

☐ I gain pleasure from watching films

☐ I like to collect films on DVD/blu-ray/video

☐ I like to keep up with award-winning films

☐ I find watching films relaxing

☐ I like to read about films in magazines or online

☐ I like to watch films with friends and/or family

☐ I don't have the patience for watching films

☐ I have no particular interest in watching films

☐ I don't have time to watch films

☐ Other

13.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

_____

14. How often do you watch films in the following ways?

	✳ *Required*
Cinema (including 3D, IMAX, film festival screenings)	Please select ▾
Home media (e.g. VHS, DVDs, Blu-ray, laser-discs)	Please select ▾
Streaming (downloaded or online, e.g. Netflix, Amazon, YouTube)	Please select ▾
Pay TV (accessed via satellite/cable, e.g. Sky, Virgin Media)	Please select ▾
Free-to-air TV (Freeview [UK], e.g. BBC, ITV, Film4, Movie Mix)	Please select ▾

15. What is your **favourite** film genre?

15.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

16. What is your **least favourite** film genre?

16.a. If you selected Other, please specify:

17. What was the title of the last film you saw, either in the cinema or at home?

17.a. How did you watch this film?

Page 10: About you

Here are a few quick questions about you. You won't be asked to provide your name, to ensure that your survey results are anonymous.

18. What age group do you fall into? ✳ *Required*

19. Are there any children/teenagers aged 17 and under in your household? ✳ *Required*

19.a. How many are children aged 12 and under?

19.b. How many are teenagers aged between 13 and 17?

20. How would you define your gender? ✳ *Required*

21. Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself? ✳ *Required*

22. How would you describe your ethnicity? ✳ *Required*

23. What is your nationality? ✳ *Required*

Page 11: Anything else?

24. Finally, if there is anything you would like to share about your experiences of Disney films as an adult, please feel free to let me know using the box below.

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Don't forget that you can contact James Mason at csjrm@leeds.ac.uk if you would like further information about the project.

Page 12: Thank you

Thank you for completing the survey.

There are no more survey questions, but you may be interested to know more about Disney. If so you can read on, if not, feel free to close out of the survey.

One of the survey questions asked you to name any studios that Disney owns. The film producing and distributing division of the Walt Disney Company is called **Walt Disney Studios** and is comprised of several different studios.

The studios listed below used to be or are currently part of Walt Disney Studios, and you can find out more about which films have been released by each studio by clicking the links, which will open in a new window. You may be surprised at the films that can be connected to the Disney Company!

- **Walt Disney Pictures** - the studio that Walt and Roy Disney set up (as Walt Disney Productions) in the 1920s to produce animated shorts moved into animated feature films in 1937, and live-action filmmaking in the 1950s.
  Films incude: *Treasure Island, Mary Poppins, Cool Runnings, Pirates of the Caribbean*

- **Touchstone Pictures** - created by Disney in 1984 to produce more adult-oriented films and used only occasionally today, generally in collaboration with (non-Disney studio) DreamWorks.
  Films include: *Splash, Sister Act, Pearl Harbour, Step Up*

- **Walt Disney Animation Studios** - animated films were split off from Walt Disney Pictures in 1986 into a new studio (known as Walt Disney Feature Animation until 2006).
  Films include: *The Lion King, The Princess and the Frog, Frozen, Wreck-It Ralph*

- **DisneyToon Studios** - a division of Walt Disney Animation Studios since 1988, specialising in sequels to animated classics, generally direct-to-video releases.
  Films include: *The Return of Jafar, The Tigger Movie, Tinker Bell, Planes*

- **Hollywood Pictures** - created by Disney in 1989 to produce more adult-oriented films, and closed in 2007.
  Films include: *Arachnaphobia, Nixon, Grosse Point Black, GI Jane*

- **Miramax** - owned by Disney between 1993 and 2010, specialising in independent and foreign language films. Subsidiary studio **Dimension Films** specialised in the horror and sci-fi genres.
  Miramax films include: *Pulp Fiction, Shakespeare in Love, Chocolat, City of God*
  Dimension films include: *The Crow, Scream, From Dusk Till Dawn, Spy Kids*

- **The Muppets Studio** - bought by Disney in 2004 and part of Walt Disney Studios until 2014. Now primarily used for television and online content.

- **Pixar Animation Studios** - Disney began distributing Pixar's computer-animated films in 1995, and bought the company in 2006.
  Films include: *Toy Story 3, Cars, Monsters University, Wall-E*

- **Disneynature** - created in 2008 to release independent nature documentaries, primarily in the USA.
  Films include: *The Crimson Wing, Oceans, African Cats, Chimpanzee*

- **Marvel Studios** - bought by Disney in 2009, films are based on comic book characters and set in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.
  Films released by Disney include: *Iron Man 3, Guardians of the Galaxy, Thor: The Dark World*

- **Lucasfilm** - bought by Disney in 2012, and includes the Star Wars and Indiana Jones properties.
  Films released by Disney so far: *Strange Magic, Star Wars: The Force Awakens*

Appendix 3c: Online Questionnaire: Results

Results from the sample survey (online questionnaire), completed by 3,524 respondents. For several questions respondents were able to select multiple responses.

		All Responses	
Questions		3,524	100%
Q2	What does the term Disney film mean to you?		
Q2_1	Entertainment	3,178	90%
Q2_2	Education	311	9%
Q2_3	Simple	735	21%
Q2_4	Complex	293	8%
Q2_5	Boring	90	3%
Q2_6	Exciting	869	25%
Q2_7	Innocent	1,030	29%
Q2_8	Corrupting	160	5%
Q2_9	Pleasure	1,618	46%
Q2_10	Nostalgia	2,382	68%
Q2_11	Original	514	15%
Q2_12	Predictable	1,029	29%
Q2_13	Good quality	1,904	54%
Q2_14	Poor quality	27	1%
Q2_15	Other	248	7%
	Total	14,388	
Q3	Which of the following genres would you normally associate with Disney films?		
Q3_1	Action	737	21%
Q3_2	Adventure	2,337	66%
Q3_3	Animation	3,259	92%
Q3_4	Biopic	59	2%
Q3_5	Comedy	2,137	61%
Q3_6	Crime	27	1%
Q3_7	Documentary	109	3%
Q3_8	Drama	597	17%
Q3_9	Family	3,021	86%
Q3_10	Fantasy	2,600	74%
Q3_11	Horror	31	1%
Q3_12	Music	1,834	52%
Q3_13	Romance	1,771	50%
Q3_14	Sci-Fi	289	8%
Q3_15	Thriller	36	1%
Q3_16	War	61	2%
Q3_17	Western	55	2%

Q3_18	Other	45	1%
	Total	19,005	

Q4	Who do you think are the target audiences for Disney films?		
Q4_1	Children under 12	2,034	58%
Q4_2	Teenagers	475	13%
Q4_3	Parents	932	26%
Q4_4	Adults	339	10%
Q4_5	Men	137	4%
Q4_6	Women	345	10%
Q4_7	Boys	703	20%
Q4_8	Girls	1,013	29%
Q4_9	Families	1,702	48%
Q4_10	Other	27	1%
	Total	7,707	

Q5	Which of the following would influence your decision to watch a Disney film?		
Q5_1	Friends	1,982	56%
Q5_2	Partner	994	28%
Q5_3	Children	1,242	35%
Q5_4	Film director	452	13%
Q5_5	Actor(s) in the film	856	24%
Q5_6	The Disney name	1,254	36%
Q5_7	Genre of the film	1,389	39%
Q5_8	Soundtrack/music	1,173	33%
Q5_9	Reviews by critics	1,330	38%
Q5_10	Familiarity with the story	1,170	33%
Q5_11	Trailer, advert or poster	2,013	57%
Q5_12	Other	169	5%
	Total	14,024	

Q6	What is your experience of watching Disney films?		
Q6_1	I have never (knowingly) watched a Disney film	6	0%
Q6_2	I watched Disney films as a child	2,954	84%
Q6_3	I look forward to watching new Disney films	1,794	51%
Q6_4	I like to watch classic Disney films	2,178	62%
Q6_5	I will watch Disney films, but I don't seek them out	1,176	33%
Q6_6	I only watch Disney films because my partner watches them	37	1%
Q6_7	I only watch Disney films with my children/family	411	12%
Q6_8	Other	168	5%
	Total	8,724	

Q7	Which of the following have you done as an adult?		
Q7_1	Taken children to the cinema to watch a Disney film	1,303	37%
Q7_2	Watched a Disney film at the cinema without children	2,251	64%
Q7_3	Bought Disney films on video/DVD/blu-ray for my children	932	26%
Q7_4	Bought Disney films on video/DVD/blu-ray for myself/partner	1,862	53%
Q7_5	Bought a Disney film soundtrack on CD/download for my children	447	13%
Q7_6	Bought a Disney film soundtrack on CD/download for myself/partner	1,014	29%
Q7_7	Watched Disney films on Sky Movies Disney or Disney Channel	1,113	32%
Q7_8	Subscribed to the DisneyLife streaming service	28	1%
Q7_9	Participated in online fan site discussion of Disney films	246	7%
Q7_10	Created or shared fan fiction, cartoons or artwork relating to Disney films	354	10%
Q7_11	Completed an online quiz relating to Disney films (not including this one!)	1,326	38%
Q7_12	None of the above	300	9%
	Total	11,176	

Q8	Do you generally enjoy watching Disney films as an adult?		
	Yes	3,164	90%
	No	360	10%
	Total	3,524	

Q8_a	Why do you enjoy watching Disney films as an adult?		
Q8_a_1	I just do / no reason	450	14%
Q8_a_2	I like animated films	1,728	55%
Q8_a_3	Nostalgia / reminds me of childhood	1,894	60%
Q8_a_4	It's a guilty pleasure	574	18%
Q8_a_5	They're easy to watch	1,594	50%
Q8_a_6	I won't be scared or upset by them	289	9%
Q8_a_7	I can watch them with my children	669	21%
Q8_a_8	They're usually well made	1,955	62%
Q8_a_9	Enjoying Disney films is no different to enjoying other films	1,639	52%
Q8_a_10	I don't know	23	1%
Q8_a_11	Other	176	6%
	Total	10,991	

Q8_b	Why don't you enjoy watching Disney films as an adult?		
Q8_b_1	I've grown up	99	28%
Q8_b_2	I've never liked Disney films	52	14%
Q8_b_3	I find them unsettling as an adult	78	22%
Q8_b_4	Better things to do with my time	147	41%
Q8_b_5	Disney is overly commercial	201	56%
Q8_b_6	They're for children	88	24%
Q8_b_7	Disney films aren't cool	14	4%
Q8_b_8	I don't identify with the characters/stories	100	28%
Q8_b_9	I prefer films made for adults	125	35%
Q8_b_10	I dislike the way they treat gender, sexuality, race, or disability	238	66%
Q8_b_11	Other	47	13%
	Total	1,189	

Q9	How has your experience of Disney films changed since you were a child?		
	I enjoy watching Disney films MORE as an adult	700	20%
	I enjoy watching Disney films LESS as an adult	831	24%
	My feelings about Disney films haven't changed	1,903	54%
	I don't watch Disney films as an adult	90	3%
	Total	3,524	

Q10	In the box below please list the film studios that you think, or know, are part of Walt Disney Studios.	3,104	88%

Q11	Who do you think are the target audiences of the studios below?		
Q11_04_a_4	Disney Animation - Adults	243	7%
Q11_10_a_4	Disney Animation - All of the above	1,244	35%
Q11_07_a_4	Disney Animation - Boys	942	27%
Q11_11_a_4	Disney Animation - Don't know	103	3%
Q11_09_a_4	Disney Animation - Families	1,760	50%
Q11_08_a_4	Disney Animation - Girls	1,257	36%
Q11_05_a_4	Disney Animation - Men	136	4%
Q11_03_a_4	Disney Animation - Parents	1,185	34%
Q11_02_a_4	Disney Animation - Teenagers	561	16%
Q11_01_a_4	Disney Animation - Under 12s	2,155	61%
Q11_06_a_4	Disney Animation - Women	442	13%
Q11_04_a_3	Lucasfilm - Adults	1,472	42%
Q11_10_a_3	Lucasfilm - All of the above	1,343	38%
Q11_07_a_3	Lucasfilm - Boys	973	28%
Q11_11_a_3	Lucasfilm - Don't know	501	14%
Q11_09_a_3	Lucasfilm - Families	725	21%
Q11_08_a_3	Lucasfilm - Girls	433	12%

Q11_05_a_3	Lucasfilm - Men	1,240	35%
Q11_03_a_3	Lucasfilm - Parents	790	22%
Q11_02_a_3	Lucasfilm - Teenagers	1,442	41%
Q11_01_a_3	Lucasfilm - Under 12s	399	11%
Q11_06_a_3	Lucasfilm - Women	668	19%
Q11_04_a_2	Marvel Studios - Adults	1,920	54%
Q11_10_a_2	Marvel Studios - All of the above	903	26%
Q11_07_a_2	Marvel Studios - Boys	1,610	46%
Q11_11_a_2	Marvel Studios - Don't know	153	4%
Q11_09_a_2	Marvel Studios - Families	675	19%
Q11_08_a_2	Marvel Studios - Girls	507	14%
Q11_05_a_2	Marvel Studios - Men	1,896	54%
Q11_03_a_2	Marvel Studios - Parents	786	22%
Q11_02_a_2	Marvel Studios - Teenagers	2,372	67%
Q11_01_a_2	Marvel Studios - Under 12s	473	13%
Q11_06_a_2	Marvel Studios - Women	796	23%
Q11_04_a_1	Pixar Animation - Adults	619	18%
Q11_10_a_1	Pixar Animation - All of the above	1,771	50%
Q11_07_a_1	Pixar Animation - Boys	1,034	29%
Q11_11_a_1	Pixar Animation - Don't know	64	2%
Q11_09_a_1	Pixar Animation - Families	1,662	47%
Q11_08_a_1	Pixar Animation - Girls	1,037	29%
Q11_05_a_1	Pixar Animation - Men	341	10%
Q11_03_a_1	Pixar Animation - Parents	1,204	34%
Q11_02_a_1	Pixar Animation - Teenagers	987	28%
Q11_01_a_1	Pixar Animation - Under 12s	1,807	51%
Q11_06_a_1	Pixar Animation - Women	507	14%
Q11_04_a_5	Touchstone - Adults	1,095	31%
Q11_10_a_5	Touchstone - All of the above	833	24%
Q11_07_a_5	Touchstone - Boys	242	7%
Q11_11_a_5	Touchstone - Don't know	1,378	39%
Q11_09_a_5	Touchstone - Families	472	13%
Q11_08_a_5	Touchstone - Girls	247	7%
Q11_05_a_5	Touchstone - Men	643	18%
Q11_03_a_5	Touchstone - Parents	605	17%
Q11_02_a_5	Touchstone - Teenagers	592	17%
Q11_01_a_5	Touchstone - Under 12s	153	4%
Q11_06_a_5	Touchstone - Women	732	21%

Q12	Which of these Disney films have you seen?			
Q12_1_a	Into the Woods - If you have seen the film, where did you watch it?			
	At the cinema		429	12%
	At home		597	17%
	At cinema & home		86	2%
		Total	1,112	32%
Q12_1_b	Into the Woods - If you have seen the film, how would you rate it?			
	1 - Poor		111	10%

	2 - OK	295	27%
	3 - Good	434	39%
	4 - Excellent	226	20%
	5 - Masterpiece	43	4%
	Total	1,109	

Q12_1_c — Into the Woods - If you have not seen the film, would you watch it?

Yes	762	36%
No	357	17%
I don't know	426	20%
Not heard of it	569	27%
Total	2,114	

Q12_2_a — Big Hero 6 - If you have seen the film, where did you watch it?

At the cinema	386	11%
At home	969	27%
At cinema & home	289	8%
Total	1,644	47%

Q12_2_b — Big Hero 6 - If you have seen the film, how would you rate it?

1 - Poor	12	1%
2 - OK	114	7%
3 - Good	445	27%
4 - Excellent	809	50%
5 - Masterpiece	240	15%
Total	1,620	

Q12_2_c — Big Hero 6 - If you have not seen the film, would you watch it?

Yes	693	43%
No	322	20%
I don't know	226	14%
Not heard of it	356	22%
Total	1,597	

Q12_3_a — Strange Magic - If you have seen the film, where did you watch it?

At the cinema	14	0%
At home	61	2%
At cinema & home	4	0%
Total	79	2%

Q12_3_b — Strange Magic - If you have seen the film, how would you rate it?

1 - Poor	22	27%
2 - OK	19	23%
3 - Good	28	35%
4 - Excellent	9	11%
5 - Masterpiece	3	4%
Total	81	

Q12_3_c	Strange Magic - If you have not seen the film, would you watch it?		
	Yes	202	7%
	No	253	8%
	I don't know	223	7%
	Not heard of it	2,329	77%
	Total	3,007	

Q12_4_a	McFarland, USA - If you have seen the film, where did you watch it?		
	At the cinema	12	0%
	At home	64	2%
	At cinema & home	5	0%
	Total	81	2%

Q12_4_b	McFarland, USA - If you have seen the film, how would you rate it?		
	1 - Poor	2	2%
	2 - OK	18	22%
	3 - Good	33	40%
	4 - Excellent	28	34%
	5 - Masterpiece	1	1%
	Total	82	

Q12_4_c	McFarland, USA - If you have not seen the film, would you watch it?		
	Yes	184	6%
	No	301	10%
	I don't know	187	6%
	Not heard of it	2,317	78%
	Total	2,989	

Q12_5_a	Cinderella - If you have seen the film, where did you watch it?		
	At the cinema	364	10%
	At home	1,264	36%
	At cinema & home	296	8%
	Total	1,924	55%

Q12_5_b	Cinderella - If you have seen the film, how would you rate it?		
	1 - Poor	51	3%
	2 - OK	380	20%
	3 - Good	731	39%
	4 - Excellent	516	28%
	5 - Masterpiece	176	9%
	Total	1,854	

Q12_5_c	Cinderella - If you have not seen the film, would you watch it?		
	Yes	558	41%
	No	511	37%
	I don't know	264	19%

	Not heard of it	43	3%
	Total	1,376	
Q12_6_a	Avengers: Age of Ultron - If you have seen the film, where did you watch it?		
	At the cinema	843	24%
	At home	464	13%
	At cinema & home	456	13%
	Total	1,763	50%
Q12_6_b	Avengers: Age of Ultron - If you have seen the film, how would you rate it?		
	1 - Poor	78	5%
	2 - OK	298	17%
	3 - Good	650	38%
	4 - Excellent	564	33%
	5 - Masterpiece	136	8%
	Total	1,726	
Q12_6_c	Avengers: Age of Ultron - If you have not seen the film, would you watch it?		
	Yes	513	35%
	No	609	41%
	I don't know	223	15%
	Not heard of it	132	9%
	Total	1,477	
Q12_7_a	Tomorrowland - If you have seen the film, where did you watch it?		
	At the cinema	194	6%
	At home	366	10%
	At cinema & home	32	1%
	Total	592	17%
Q12_7_b	Tomorrowland - If you have seen the film, how would you rate it?		
	1 - Poor	72	12%
	2 - OK	164	28%
	3 - Good	235	40%
	4 - Excellent	102	17%
	5 - Masterpiece	16	3%
	Total	589	
Q12_7_c	Tomorrowland - If you have not seen the film, would you watch it?		
	Yes	743	29%
	No	525	21%
	I don't know	496	20%
	Not heard of it	764	30%
	Total	2,528	
Q12_8_a	Inside Out - If you have seen the film, where did you watch it?		

	At the cinema	802	23%
	At home	821	23%
	At cinema & home	442	13%
	Total	2,065	59%
Q12_8_b	Inside Out - If you have seen the film, how would you rate it?		
	1 - Poor	22	1%
	2 - OK	95	5%
	3 - Good	367	18%
	4 - Excellent	860	43%
	5 - Masterpiece	661	33%
	Total	2,005	
Q12_8_c	Inside Out - If you have not seen the film, would you watch it?		
	Yes	747	61%
	No	151	12%
	I don't know	126	10%
	Not heard of it	194	16%
	Total	1,218	
Q12_9_a	Ant-Man - If you have seen the film, where did you watch it?		
	At the cinema	451	13%
	At home	459	13%
	At cinema & home	164	5%
	Total	1,074	30%
Q12_9_b	Ant-Man - If you have seen the film, how would you rate it?		
	1 - Poor	27	3%
	2 - OK	163	15%
	3 - Good	387	36%
	4 - Excellent	410	39%
	5 - Masterpiece	74	7%
	Total	1,061	
Q12_9_c	Ant-Man - If you have not seen the film, would you watch it?		
	Yes	766	37%
	No	640	31%
	I don't know	354	17%
	Not heard of it	324	16%
	Total	2,084	
Q12_10_a	The Good Dinosaur - If you have seen the film, where did you watch it?		
	At the cinema	258	7%
	At home	174	5%
	At cinema & home	28	1%
	Total	460	13%

Q12_10_b	The Good Dinosaur - If you have seen the film, how would you rate it?		
	1 - Poor	48	11%
	2 - OK	101	23%
	3 - Good	158	36%
	4 - Excellent	112	25%
	5 - Masterpiece	22	5%
	Total	441	
Q12_10_c	The Good Dinosaur - If you have not seen the film, would you watch it?		
	Yes	1,064	40%
	No	635	24%
	I don't know	448	17%
	Not heard of it	535	20%
	Total	2,682	
Q12_11_a	Star Wars: The Force Awakens - If you have seen the film, where did you watch it?		
	At the cinema	1,839	52%
	At home	78	2%
	At cinema & home	217	6%
	Total	2,134	61%
Q12_11_b	Star Wars: The Force Awakens - If you have seen the film, how would you rate it?		
	1 - Poor	27	1%
	2 - OK	123	6%
	3 - Good	416	20%
	4 - Excellent	972	47%
	5 - Masterpiece	542	26%
	Total	2,080	
Q12_11_c	Star Wars: The Force Awakens - If you have not seen the film, would you watch it?		
	Yes	639	53%
	No	416	35%
	I don't know	133	11%
	Not heard of it	13	1%
	Total	1,201	
Q13	How do you feel about watching films in general?		
Q13_1	I gain pleasure from watching films	3,192	91%
Q13_2	I like to collect films on DVD/blu-ray/video	1,221	35%
Q13_3	I like to keep up with award-winning films	1,219	35%
Q13_4	I find watching films relaxing	2,523	72%
Q13_5	I like to read about films in magazines or online	1,346	38%
Q13_6	I like to watch films with friends and/or family	2,726	77%
Q13_7	I don't have the patience for watching films	157	4%
Q13_8	I have no particular interest in watching films	115	3%

Q13_9	I don't have time to watch films	246	7%
Q13_10	Other	89	3%
	Total	12,834	

Q14	How often do you watch films in the following ways?		
Q14_1_a	Cinema (inc. 3D, IMAX, film festival screenings)		
	On a daily basis	3	0%
	At least once a week	155	4%
	At least once a month	972	28%
	Less than once a month	2,267	64%
	Never	108	3%
	Don't know	19	1%
Q14_2_a	Home media (e.g. VHS, DVDs, Blu-ray, laser-discs)		
	On a daily basis	150	4%
	At least once a week	907	26%
	At least once a month	1,037	29%
	Less than once a month	1,079	31%
	Never	322	9%
	Don't know	29	1%
Q14_3_a	Streaming (downloaded or online)		
	On a daily basis	520	15%
	At least once a week	1,228	35%
	At least once a month	931	26%
	Less than once a month	489	14%
	Never	343	10%
	Don't know	13	0%
Q14_4_a	Pay TV (accessed via satellite/cable)		
	On a daily basis	139	4%
	At least once a week	345	10%
	At least once a month	355	10%
	Less than once a month	553	16%
	Never	2,097	60%
	Don't know	35	1%
Q14_5_a	Free-to-air TV		
	On a daily basis	142	4%
	At least once a week	493	14%
	At least once a month	762	22%
	Less than once a month	949	27%
	Never	1,042	30%
	Don't know	136	4%

Q15	What is your favourite film genre?		
	Action	150	4%
	Adventure	146	4%
	Animation	178	5%
	Biopic	16	0%
	Comedy	457	13%

	Crime	43	1%
	Disney	109	3%
	Documentary	121	3%
	Drama	404	11%
	Family	40	1%
	Fantasy	261	7%
	Horror	108	3%
	Music	40	1%
	Romance	141	4%
	Sci-Fi	399	11%
	Thriller	132	4%
	War	10	0%
	Western	8	0%
	No preference	673	19%
	Other	79	2%
	Total	3,515	

Q16	What is your least favourite film genre?		
	Action	124	4%
	Adventure	2	0%
	Animation	14	0%
	Biopic	108	3%
	Comedy	31	1%
	Crime	54	2%
	Disney	22	1%
	Documentary	68	2%
	Drama	26	1%
	Family	30	1%
	Fantasy	28	1%
	Horror	1,309	38%
	Music	74	2%
	Romance	314	9%
	Sci-Fi	125	4%
	Thriller	35	1%
	War	304	9%
	Western	486	14%
	No preference	262	8%
	Other	27	1%
	Total	3,443	

Q18	What age group do you fall into?		
	18-24	679	19%
	25-34	1,676	48%
	35-44	720	20%
	45 +	449	13%

Q19	Are there any children/teenagers aged 17 and under in your household?		
	Yes	1,039	29%

	No	2,485	71%
Q19_a	How many are children aged 12 and under?		
	0	188	5%
	1	429	12%
	2	347	10%
	3	60	2%
	4	11	0%
	5+	4	0%
Q19_b	How many are teenagers aged between 13 & 17?		
	0	731	21%
	1	225	6%
	2	72	2%
	3	9	0%
	4	1	0%
	5+	0	0%
Q20	How would you define your gender?		
	Female	2,590	73%
	Male	861	24%
	Other	72	2%
Q21	Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?		
	Heterosexual / Straight	2,621	74%
	Gay or Lesbian	244	7%
	Bisexual	423	12%
	Other	118	3%
	Prefer not to say	117	3%
Q22	How would you describe your ethnicity?		
	White	3,043	86%
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	4	0%
	Black - African	30	1%
	Black - Caribbean	6	0%
	Other Black/African/Caribbean background	13	0%
	Asian - Indian	33	1%
	Asian - Pakistani	5	0%
	Asian - Bangladeshi	6	0%
	Chinese	51	1%
	Other Asian background	37	1%
	Mixed - White and Black African	11	0%
	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	12	0%
	Mixed - White and Asian	38	1%
	Other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background	93	3%
	Arab	5	0%
	Other ethnic background	73	2%
	Not known	4	0%
	Prefer not to say	59	2%

Q23	What is your nationality?		
UK	British*	1,555	44%
UK	English*	32	1%
UK	Irish*	43	1%
UK	Northern Irish*	2	0%
UK	Scottish*	37	1%
UK	Welsh*	34	1%
Africa	Chadian	1	0%
Africa	Djibouti	1	0%
Africa	Egyptian	1	0%
Africa	Ghanaian	2	0%
Africa	Malagasy	1	0%
Africa	Nigerian	1	0%
Africa	South African	6	0%
Africa	Zimbabwean	1	0%
Asia	Bangladeshi	2	0%
Asia	Chinese	17	0%
Asia	Filipino	5	0%
Asia	Indian	6	0%
Asia	Indonesian	5	0%
Asia	Iranian	1	0%
Asia	Israeli	5	0%
Asia	Japanese	1	0%
Asia	Kazakhstani	2	0%
Asia	Lebanese	2	0%
Asia	Malaysian	12	0%
Asia	Pakistani	2	0%
Asia	Saudi	1	0%
Asia	Singaporean	9	0%
Asia	South Korean	1	0%
Asia	Sri Lankan	2	0%
Asia	Taiwanese	5	0%
Asia	Thai	1	0%
Australasia	Australian*	125	4%
Australasia	Fijian*	1	0%
Australasia	New Zealander*	23	1%
Europe	Austrian	15	0%
Europe	Belgian	14	0%
Europe	Bulgarian	9	0%
Europe	Cypriot	1	0%
Europe	Czech	2	0%
Europe	Danish	12	0%
Europe	Dutch	30	1%
Europe	Finnish	10	0%

Europe	French	57	2%
Europe	Georgian	3	0%
Europe	German	55	2%
Europe	Greek	25	1%
Europe	Italian	44	1%
Europe	Latvian	2	0%
Europe	Luxembourger	4	0%
Europe	Maltese*	1	0%
Europe	Norwegian	18	1%
Europe	Polish	57	2%
Europe	Portuguese	7	0%
Europe	Russian	4	0%
Europe	San Marinese	1	0%
Europe	Serbian	1	0%
Europe	Slovakian	2	0%
Europe	Spanish	13	0%
Europe	Swedish	12	0%
Europe	Swiss	5	0%
Europe	Turkish	1	0%
North America	American*	970	28%
North America	Canadian*	122	3%
South America	Argentinean	1	0%
South America	Brazilian	47	1%
South America	Chilean	4	0%
South America	Colombian	4	0%
South America	Costa Rican	1	0%
South America	Dominican	2	0%
South America	Mexican	13	0%
South America	Peruvian	3	0%
South America	Trinidadian or Tobagonian	2	0%
South America	Uruguayan	1	0%
South America	Venezuelan	3	0%
	UK + Ireland	1,703	48%
	North America	1,092	31%
	Europe (Ex. UK + Ireland)	405	11%
	South America	81	2%
	Australasia	149	4%
	Asia	79	2%
	Africa	14	0%
	*English speaking countries only	2,945	84%
Q24	Anything Else…		
	Total responses	1,000	28%
	Substantive responses	965	27%

Source for Appendix 3c: Author's online questionnaire, conducted through Bristol Online Surveys. Data has been edited by author for presentation in appendices.

Appendix 4a: Focus Groups: Information Sheet

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INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS
October 2016

Disney & Adult Audiences Focus Group

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask me if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. I would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

What is the purpose of the study?

The study is a PhD research project investigating adult audience's experiences of feature films produced by the Walt Disney Company. Disney is one of the biggest entertainment producers in the world and plays a part in the lives of millions of people. Previous research has been carried out into the different ways that audiences in general interact with, and are affected by, Disney's wide-ranging activities. However, very little attention has been paid to the ways in which adult audiences experience and feel about Disney films.

The research will study adult audiences' preconceptions about Disney films, consider how these understandings influence and inform the ways in which audiences respond to Disney films, and assess Disney's approach to adult audiences.

Do I have to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you may decide to withdraw at any time, without explanation and without incurring a disadvantage.

What will happen next if I take part?

You are being invited to discuss several questions about Disney films as part of a focus group led by researcher James Mason. You will be asked your opinions and experiences about the subject, and invited to discuss them with your fellow participants. You are also asked to complete a short survey ahead of the focus group.

Are there any risks or benefits in taking part?

I do not foresee any risks or hazards for participants taking part in this research. However, if you should experience any discomfort or disadvantage as part of the research, you should let me know immediately. The research offers no direct benefits for participants other than an opportunity to express their interests and listen to others' views in the discussion group.

I hope that you will find the experience enjoyable and rewarding – there are no right or wrong answers and no judgements will be made about the opinions expressed. All comments are welcome.

Will my participation be kept confidential?

All data from the focus groups will be stored securely at the University of Leeds. Only James Mason will have access to personal data, and your details will be stored separately to ensure your anonymity. All personal data will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and will not be passed on to any third parties. In the write-up of the research, the data will be presented completely anonymously.

This PhD research has been granted ethical approval by the Ethical Review Committee at the University of Leeds.

Will I be recorded and how will the recordings be used?

I will be audio-recording the focus group session and will transcribe your words and the words of discussion participants for this project and later research. Your contributions will help me to form the focus and direction of my study.

The audio recordings made during this research will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

What will happen to the results of the study?

Research data (for example, quotations from the focus group), may be used in publications, reports, and other research outputs, but your names will not be used and participants will not be personally identifiable unless you give permission. If you would like me to let you know about future publications connected to this project, please tell me and I will inform you (your contact details will be stored securely until I can inform you of the publication and its accessibility).

Who can I contact if I have further questions?

If you would like further information on this study, or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me:

James Mason
Tel: 07973 781190
Email: csjrm@leeds.ac.uk
Twitter: @JamesDoesDisney

School of Media and Communication, Clothworkers' Building North, Room 1.07 University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT

Thank you in advance for your invaluable contribution to the project!

Appendix 4b: Focus Groups: Survey

Disney & Adult Audiences Focus Group
School of Media and Communication, University of Leeds

Focus Group Survey
October 2016

Thank you for taking the time to complete this short survey. Please tick the relevant boxes, and add your comments where indicated.

1a. Age group:

18 - 24	
25 - 34	
35 – 44	
45 and over	

1b. Gender:

Male	
Female	
Other	
Prefer not to say	

1c. Sexuality:

Heterosexual/straight	
Gay or lesbian	
Bisexual	
Other	
Prefer not to say	

1d. Number of children/teenagers aged 17 and under in your household:

2. What is your experience of watching Disney films? Select as many options as you need:

I have never (knowingly) watched a Disney film	
I watched Disney films as a child	
I look forward to watching new Disney films	
I like to watch classic/old Disney films	
I will watch Disney films, but I don't seek them out	
I only watch Disney films because my partner watches them	
I only watch Disney films with my children/family	
Other (please specify):	

3. Do you generally enjoy watching Disney films as an adult?

I enjoy all Disney films	
I enjoy most Disney films	
My level of enjoyment depends on the film	
I don't enjoy most Disney films	
I don't enjoy any Disney films	

4. In the box below, please write up to 5 words/phrases that you associate with Disney films:

If you have any questions about this project, please contact the researcher, James Mason at:

School of Media and Communication, Clothworkers' Building North, 1.07
University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT
Email: csjrm@leeds.ac.uk / Tel: 07973781190

Appendix 4c: Focus Groups: Consent Form

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Consent to take part in:

Disney & Adult Audiences Focus Group

Researcher: Mr James Mason

	Add your initials next to the statements you agree with
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated October 2016 explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I agree for the anonymised data collected from me to be used in relevant future research.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of researcher	Mr James Mason
Signature	
Date	

The signed and dated consent form will be kept with the project's main documents in a secure location in accordance with University procedures.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact the researcher, James Mason at:

School of Media and Communication, Clothworkers' Building North, 1.07
University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT
Email: csjrm@leeds.ac.uk / Tel: 07973781190

Appendix 5: Ethical Approval

Performance, Governance and Operations
Research & Innovation Service
Charles Thackrah Building
101 Clarendon Road
Leeds LS2 9LJ Tel: 0113 343 4873
Email: ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk

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James Mason
Clothworkers' Building North, Room 1.07
School of Media and Communication
University of Leeds
Leeds, LS2 9JT

PVAR Faculty Research Ethics Committee
University of Leeds

9 December 2015

Dear James

Title of study: Disney rules, UK? Exploring audience responses to
contemporary Disney films
Ethics reference: LTCOMM-024

I am pleased to inform you that the above application for light touch ethical review has been reviewed by a School Ethics Representative of the PVAC and Arts (PVAR) joint Faculty Research Ethics Committee. I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion on the basis of the application form as of the date of this letter.

The following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
LTCOMM-024 Ethics Light Touch James Mason 30 11 15.pdf	1	30/11/15

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted at date of this approval as all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAmendment.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited. There is a checklist listing examples of documents to be kept which is available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAudits.

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions for improvement. Please email any comments to ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Blaikie
Senior Research Ethics Administrator, Research & Innovation Service
On behalf of Dr Kevin Macnish, Chair, PVAR FREC
CC: Student's supervisor

NB: Ethical approval was granted under the research title: 'Disney rules, UK? Exploring audience responses to contemporary Disney films'. While the title and focus of the audience research changed, the methods employed did not.