

Gender stereotypes in *Moana* (2016): A film analysis of the main character

Yogi Zanualdy Ramadhan
English Language and Literature
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Gender stereotyping is a common phenomenon shown in films. Many films, such as those produced by Disney, often portray their male and female characters stereotypically. One of Disney's recent children movies is *Moana* (2016). This research aims to analyze how the main character in *Moana* (2016) is portrayed and seeks to answer whether the portrayal conform to or goes against gender stereotypes. To analyze the gender stereotypes embedded in the film, the study draws on Evans and Davies' (2009) framework as well as those of Copenhaver's (2002) and Brannon's (2016). Meanwhile, Boggs and Petrie's (2008) characterization in films has been adopted to unravel the character of Moana. The analysis shows that Moana is portrayed as a character who possesses both masculine and feminine traits; the masculine traits, however, are more dominant than the feminine ones. This indicates that the film tends to go against gender stereotyping by portraying a complexity of traits within the main character.

Keywords: *Disney's Movie, Gender Stereotypes.*

INTRODUCTION

Films play an important role in affecting people's lives, especially children. Children films may have characters that children viewers treat as their role models. For example, the cartoon series *Crayon Shinchan* has a character named Shinchan who is funny and entertaining to watch. However, Shinchan has also been criticized as displaying bad manners toward parents, friends, and others around him. This example, therefore, shows that it can be problematic if children blindly imitate something in the film.

One of the most popular children film's production house is Disney. One of the most famous works by Disney is their princess films. For quite a long time, Disney's princess films have told fairy-tale romance stories of weak princesses and strong princes. However, presently, Disney's stories as well as its characters seem to have shifted and reflected the present reality more. While most of Disney's princess films before 2000, such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Cinderella* (1950), and *Sleeping*

Beauty (1959), have weak, dependent, and passive female main characters, films after 2000, such as *Frozen* (2013), *Brave* (2012), and *Moana* (2016), tend to have a main female character that is strong, independent and brave. These shifting traits of female characters in Disney films appear to reflect the shifting perceptions of women in real life. This shows how gender stereotypes can change over time.

Gender stereotyping is one of the undeniable facts of life. Gender stereotyping in films is worth analyzing, since films can have a significant impact towards the audiences. Gender stereotypes shown in a film can influence and shape the attitudes of those who watch the film. For example, some children who watch *Cinderella* (1950) or *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) might be affected by the appearance of the princesses they see in the films and start to imitate how they look, while some boys might want to be strong and heroic like the prince. Even though gender stereotypes can change over time, most films portray their male and female characters in line with the

traditional gender stereotypes. Traditionally, men are portrayed as someone who is strong, brave, adventurous and independent, while women are generally portrayed as powerless, dependent, and emotional. These stereotypes, too, have often been found in Disney's princess films.

Moana (2016), however, is different because some of the traits attached to the main character do not seem conform to the traditional gender stereotypes. This makes the character, Moana, worth analyzing. Since the film has only been released in 2016, there are only, to the best of my knowledge, few studies on *Moana* (Khairunnisa, 2017; Streiff and Dundes, 2017). However, these research studies did not focus specifically on examining gender stereotypes in the film. Therefore, to contribute to research on *Moana*, this study aims to analyze how the main character is portrayed in the film and explores the gender stereotypes attached to her. To analyze the gender stereotypes, the study uses Evans and Davies's (2009) framework as well as those of Copenhaver's (2002) and

Brannon (2016). The three frameworks have been drawn on because they complement each other: Copenhaver's (2002) framework provides feminine and masculine traits classification to analyze Moana, Evans and Davies's (2009) provides a clear explanation of those traits, and Brannon's (2016) framework provide *The Cult of True Womanhood* as the traditional female gender stereotypes. Meanwhile, Boggs and Petrie's (2008) characterization in films serve as a methodological tool to analyze the main character of *Moana*.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This part consists of a discussion of the theoretical framework related to the research. It is divided into three major parts: (1) film studies, (2) gender stereotypes, and (3) characterization in Films.

Film Studies

Films have been part of many people's lives. However, there is no clear definition of what a film is. Even though Arnheim (1957) believes that film is similar to literature, painting, music, in a way that it is used to

produce artistic results, Kolker (2000) emphasizes that it is hard to define film since films seem to have become a taken-for-granted part of most people's lives. He points out that that film is just film; film is just there to be enjoyed.

Even though Kolker (2000) believes that film can be considered as an art, since it is actually a text just like other art forms, he argues that film is different in some ways. A text, according to Kolker (2002), is an understandable structure of meanings which consist of complex related events in a context. Moreover, Kolker (2002) added the differences between text in films and in any other arts lie on their physical (photographic images), narrative (experience by watching the film), economic and cultural (the production, distribution, and consumption) features.

Furthermore, Wardaningsih (2017) states that the purposes of film studies are to disclose and also explain the techniques which distinguish film and any other literary works. In addition to this, Nelmes (2012) argues that film studies is not only about the mechanics of film

making, but also how it affects the audience as well

Gender Stereotypes in Film

Gender stereotypes can be defined as beliefs about characteristics associated with, and the activities appropriate to, men or women (Brannon, 2016). In the literature, this term has often been contrasted with the term sex. However according to Stoller (1990) sex refers to the physical differences between men and women, while gender refers to the behavior and cultural practices of men and women. Gender stereotypes can also be defined as the characteristics of genders which draw differences between typical "masculine" and "feminine" in society (Krahn, 2015).

According to Brannon (2016), gender stereotypes have four different aspects: physical characteristics, occupations, traits and behavior. First, physical characteristics refer to one's appearance physically. Second, occupation is associated with one's job. Third, traits is someone's distinguishable features personality-

wise, and last, behavior is one’s action toward something.

Table 1. Brannon’s (2016) elements of stereotyping of women and men

“The Cult of True Womanhood”	“Male Sex Role Identity”
<i>Piety</i>	<i>No Sissy Stuff</i>
<i>Purity</i>	<i>The Big Wheel</i>
<i>Submissiveness</i>	<i>The Sturdy Oak</i>
<i>Domesticity</i>	<i>Give ‘Em Hell</i>

The elements of stereotyping women and men above have been synthesized by Brannon (2016) from many sources. Traditionally, stereotypes attached to women have been conceptualized as “Cult of True Womanhood” (p. 161), which consists of four aspects: *piety* (naturally religious), *purity* (sexually uninterested), *submissiveness* (weak, dependent, and timid), *domesticity* (their domain was in the home). According to Brannon (2016) women who have these characteristics will gain happiness and power since without these characteristics women’s lives have no real meaning. Stereotypes attached to men, on the other hand, have been conceptualized as “Male Sex Role Identity” (p. 162). In Brannon’s view, this defines what

a real man is. This concept consists of four major elements that contain the following ideas: *No Sissy Stuff* (no feminine characteristics such as nurturing, submissiveness, and patience), *The Big Wheel* (being successful), *The Sturdy Oak* (toughness, confidence, and self-reliance), and *Give ‘Em Hell* (aura of aggression, daring, and violence). Brannon (2016) also emphasizes the binary opposition within the gender stereotypes by providing the opposites of the stereotypes attached; for example, women were expected to be weak, while men were expected to be strong.

In addition to Brannon’s framework, Copenhaver (2002) has conceptualized feminine and masculine traits as follows:

Table 2. Gender Traits by Copenhaver (2002, p. 83-84)

Masculine	Feminine
Non-emotional / Non-excitabile	Emotional / Excitable
Objective	Subjective
Competitive	Non-competitive
Logical / Rational	Illogical / Irrational
Direct	Sneaky
Self-confident	Not self-confident
Sloppy	Neat
Ambitious	Non-ambitious
Provide security / stability	Need security / stability
Self-esteem from work	Self-esteem from relationship
Act alone	People oriented
Fearless	Fearful
Rough	Gentle
Less intuitive about others' feelings	Intuitive about others' feelings

Other than the above traits definitions of gender stereotypical provided by Copenhaver (2002), traits, as shown below: Evans and Davies (2009) also list

Table 3. Gender Personality Traits with Definitions by Evans and Davies (2009)

taken from Kimsey (2011, p.17)

Personality Traits	Definition
<i>Masculine traits</i>	
Aggressive	Actions and motives with intent to hurt or frighten; imparts hostile feelings
Adventurous	Actively exploring the environment, be it real or imaginary
Argumentative	Belligerent; verbally disagreeable with another
Assertive	Taking charge of a situation, making plans and issuing instructions
Competitive	Challenging to win over another physically or intellectually

Decisive	Quick to consider options/situation and make up mind
Risk-taker	Willing to take a chance on personal safety or reputation to achieve a goal
Self-reliant	Can accomplish tasks or handle situations alone with confidence
<i>Feminine Traits</i>	
Affectionate	Openly expressing warm feelings; hugging, touching, holding
Emotionally expressive	Allowing feelings to show, including temper tantrums, crying, or laughing
Impetuous	Quick to act without thinking of the consequences; impulsive
Nurturing	Actively caring and aiding another's development, be it physically or emotionally
Panicky	Reacting to situation with hysteria; crying, shouting, running
Passive	Following another's lead and not being active in a situation
Tender	Handling someone with gentle sensitivity and consideration
Understanding	Being able to see and comprehend a situation from another person's perspective; showing empathy

Copenhaver's (2002) and Evans and Davies's (2009) frameworks above provide a concrete classification of feminine and masculine traits; Copenhaver (2002) provides more traits to classify and identify with, while Evans and Davies (2009) provide a concrete explanation of those traits. These lists by Copenhaver (2002) and Evans and Davies (2009) are only used as guidance as they believe that gender stereotypes traits are different for one person and the others.

In addition, Murnen, Greenfield, Younger and Boyd

(2016), state that there are prescriptive and proscriptive (what people should do and not do) stereotype for each gender. For example, prescription for men includes being the breadwinner, while the prescription for women is that they should stay at home. Krahn (2015) supports the idea of prescriptive and proscriptive by saying that "The everyday activities of men and women in their social roles, lead to their individual social role categorizations of gender stereotypes" (p. 6).

Gender stereotypes have been portrayed in many ways in the media, and these stereotypes can affect the way people see their roles in the society. As stated by Krahn (2016), one influencing factor in defining gender stereotypes among individuals is the influence from the media. Films, as one of the most important forms of the media, can be very influential in shaping people's mindset and attitudes. Unfortunately, many films tend to portray and perpetuate the aforementioned gender stereotypes for men and women. For example, men tend to be portrayed as strong, brave, and independent, while women as weak and dependent. People might use the stereotypes shown in films as a role model for themselves. Moreover, some people might think that the stereotypes in the films are true, especially when the stereotypes are continually being shown that way. Therefore, gender stereotyping is dangerous as it can have negative influences on how people see themselves and others.

Characterization in Films

Characterization simply can be defined as the process on how the writer reveals character's personality. Character is undeniably one of the most important aspects of literary works. To make a character more alive, relatable, and believable, characterization is one way to do it. According to Rimmon-Kenan (2002) for novel and short stories, there are two categories of characterization: direct and indirect categorization.

Rimmon-Kenan (2002) states that direct characterization is when the characterization is directly stated on the text. The writer directly mention the traits of the character by: using adjective (she is nice), an abstract noun (his kindness knows no limit), some other kind of noun (Steve is a king of dancing), and as a part of speech (she doesn't like herself). Indirect characterization, on the contrary, means the characterization is not directly stated on the text. Rimmon-Kenan (2002) believes that most of the characterization adopts indirect characterization, since it will put more active roles on the readers to depict the characters by themselves.

Rimmon-Kenan (2002) divides indirect characterization into four elements: action (kindness act shown by someone who helps the others), speech (rude traits shown by someone who talks impolitely towards elders), external appearance (dirty traits shown by someone who rarely change their outfit), and environment (characters economic situation shown by their living cost)

However, direct and indirect characterization are only for written literature. Analyzing films is different from analyzing novel or short stories since, according to Boggs and Petrie (2008), “film depends greatly on visual and other nonverbal elements that are not easily expressed in writing” (p. 41). Therefore, they provide other methods to analyze characterization in films: 1) Characterization through appearance, 2) Characterization through dialogue, 3) Characterization through external action, 4) Characterization through internal action, 5) Characterization through reactions of other characters, 6) Characterization through contrast: Dramatic foils, 7) Characterization through caricature and leitmotif, 8)

Characterization through choice of name. Their framework of characterization is elaborated below.

A. Characterization Through Appearance

As appearance is the main focus of film, appearance holds an important roles in film to deliver a character’s characterization. When a character appears in the film, it will draw several assumptions about the character regarding their physical appearance, clothing, and facial features. Boggs and Petrie (2008) exemplify through *Erin Brokovich*, who wears tight, sexy clothes which initially mislead film watchers about her personality.

B. Characterization Through Dialogue

Characterization can also be drawn from the dialogue. Things the characters say and their ways of saying things might reveal their true thoughts. According to Boggs and Petrie (2008), word choices, stress, pitch, and pause

patterns may reveal a character's true thoughts, attitudes, and emotion. Boggs and Petrie exemplify characterization through dialogue by showing *Possession*, a film which tells a story about two couples who live in different centuries. The formal diction of one couple clashes with the casual vernacular spoken by the other couple to show the distinction between them.

C. Characterization Through External Action

Boggs and Petrie (2008) argue that even though appearance is important to know character's characterization, sometimes appearances can be misleading. Moreover, they believe that the best reflection of the character is their actions. Boggs and Petrie (2008) state that "there should be a clear relationship between a character and his or her actions; the actions should grow naturally out of the character's personality" (p.62). It means that the character's action will represent who they are.

However, Boggs and Petrie (2008) argue that not all action will represent their characterization. Sometimes the most effective way to reveal a character's characterization is by small insignificant action, not the large one. Boggs and Petrie (2008) exemplify this with a firefighter. A firefighter shows his bravery by saving a child from a burning building. While this act can be seen as representing his duty, the act of saving the little girl's doll shows that he is a big hearted man who understands the doll's value for the little girl.

D. Characterization Through Internal Action

Boggs and Petrie (2008) state that even the most careful listener might not be able to see or hear others' inner world. Yet, they claim that most of the time this inner world is an important aspect to understand a character. According to Boggs and Petrie (2008) this occurs in character's minds and emotions, which

consist of secrets, unspoken thoughts, daydreams, aspirations, memories, fears, and fantasies. The most obvious way to reveal a character's internal action is by taking viewers into the character's mind so viewers can see or hear the character's imagination.

Wardaningsih (2017) exemplifies this by using Willy Wonka in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Burton, 2005). She states that Willy Wonka is portrayed in that film as someone who is eccentric and as someone who hates the existence of parents. Burton (2005) shows Willy Wonka's past so the viewers are able to feel what Willy Wonka felt at that time.

E. Characterization Through Reactions of Other Characters

There will be more than one character in a story. The way they see each other can also contribute towards characterization (Boggs & Petrie, 2008). Furthermore, they elaborate that sometimes the information about one character

may appear even before the character's first appearance on the screen through other characters. This is the case in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. The audience can imply that Lord Voldemort is scary and strong according to what other characters say about him.

F. Characterization Through Contrast: Dramatic Foils

Boggs and Petrie (2008) define foils as contrasting characters whose behaviors, attitude, opinions, lifestyle, and physical appearance are the opposite of those of the main character. They state that by foiling characters, it gives similar effect of putting black and white together. By contrasting characters, it may give a clearer information of one's characterization.

Wardaningsih (2017) exemplifies this by using two characters from *Men in Black* (Sonnenfeld, 1997). Two agents, who are Agent J and Agent K, have very different

characteristics, thus showing Agent J and Agent K's characteristics clearer since there is someone to contrast their characteristics with.

G. Characterization Through Caricature and Leitmotif

According to Boggs and Petrie (2008), caricature is a technique that is usually used to exaggerate or distort one or more dominant features of one character. One example of this is Mr. Bean's stupidity and his innocence in the series *Mr. Bean* (Atkinson, 1990). These traits of Mr. Bean construct a caricature in his characterization.

Leitmotif, according to Boggs and Petrie (2008) is "the repetition of a single action, phrase, or idea by a character until it becomes almost a trademark of theme song for that character" (p. 66). They believe that it is similar with caricature since it deals with exaggeration, however in this case it is exaggerated through repetition. For example, Groot from

Guardians of the Galaxy (Gunn, 2014) repeatedly says "I am Groot!" which shows how he wants to be known as Groot.

H. Characterization Through Choice of Name

According to Boggs and Petrie (2008), one of the most important methods in characterization is name-typing. Name-typing is the use of names which fits into qualities of sound, meaning, and connotation. Moreover, they added that in any literary works. Wardaningsih (2017) exemplifies this through the name Jack Dawson in *Titanic* (1997). She stated that Jack is one of the most common names in 1920s, the time when the catastrophe happened.

To meet the purpose of this study, this research draws on three methods to analyze the characterization of *Moana*: 1) characterization through dialogue, 2) characterization through external action, 3) characterization through internal action. These three have been

chosen because they are the most relevant analytical tools for analyzing Moana's character.

Previous Studies

A number of studies have been conducted to analyze gender stereotypes in various contexts. For example Mou and Peng (2008) analyzed gender stereotypes in popular video games. They analyzed it using quantitative method, and found that there is no female or minority leading role in popular video games. Mou and Peng (2008) argue that the representation of female and minority characters in a video games might have significant impact on the players, especially adolescent who are still in the developing stage of life.

Another example comes from Carli, Alawa, Lee, Zhao and Kim (2016), who conducted a research study on gender stereotypes in a professional context. She found that women are perceived to lack the qualities needed to be successful scientists. The study also points that women may be at disadvantage in science because of the stereotypes that has been built about women and

successful scientists. Further example is from Boldry, Wood, and Kashy (2002), who analyze gender stereotypes in the context of military. Their aim is to examine the extent to which stereotypes of men and women in the military affect students. The result is male cadets were judged to possess bigger motivation than female cadets. The other example, Streiff and Dundes (2017) analyzed gender stereotypes in movie using qualitative method. They analyzed gender stereotypes in *Frozen* (2013). Their main purpose is to analyze how Elsa was portrayed in the movie. They found that Elsa is just a variation on the archetypal power-hungry female villain whose lust for power replaces lust for a mate and who threatens the patriarchal status quo.

The studies above illustrate that gender stereotypes are all pervasive, existing in various contexts, which proves that gender stereotypes is one of the undeniable facts of life.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is conducted using qualitative method because it aims to

investigate the portrayal of the character Moana in *Moana* (2016). This study is descriptive in nature, which means it contains open-ended research questions and data source. Qualitative method is chosen because this research aims to explore a particular phenomenon (that is, gender stereotyping in a children movie) and create meanings rather than confirm hypotheses (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005).

The data source of this study is *Moana* (2016), one of Disney Princess Film. The film was released in November 2016 and is directed and written by Ron Clements and John Musker. The film tells about a daughter of a chief of Polynesian area. When she was young, the sea chooses her to return the heart of Te Fiti, she is a goddess which possesses the power to create life. Heart of Te Fiti was stolen by Maui long time before Moana was born. Moana is really fond of the sea; she always tried to sail but her father never let her. When there was a crisis about resources on her island, Moana's grandmother told Moana that she

could save this island by returning the heart of Te Fiti, but Moana needs to ask for Maui's help. On the first meeting between Maui and Moana, Maui didn't want to help Moana. However, Moana got Maui's help after some persuasion. In the end, Moana successfully returned the heart of Te Fiti and saved her island.

The data for this study are taken from *Moana* (2016) in the forms of scenes and scripts. The procedure in gathering data is as follows:

1. Watch the film and read the script several times.
2. Analyze Moana's characterization based on Boggs and Petrie's (2008) framework of characterization by using three methods which are drawn from internal conflicts, external conflicts, and dialogue to obtain Moana's traits.
3. Classify these traits into masculine and feminine traits by using Evans and Davies's (2009) and Copenhagen's (2002) gender stereotypes theory.

4. Analyze whether Moana subvert or confirm the gender stereotypes by using Evans and Davies's (2009) and Copenhaver's (2002) gender stereotypes framework and Brannon's (2016) *The Cult of True Womanhood*.
5. Investigate the signification of the portrayal of Moana and gender stereotypes in *Moana*.

♪ *There's a line where the sky meets the sea and it calls me / But no one knows how far it goes / All the time wondering where I need to be is behind me / I'm on my own, to worlds unknown / Every turn I take, every trail I track / Is a choice I make, now I can't turn back / From the great unknown, where I go alone, where I long to be / See her light up the night in the sea, she calls me / And yes, I know, that I can go / There's a moon in the sky and the wind is behind me / Soon I'll know, how far I'll go* ♪ (30:48-32:00)

The above excerpt, which can be considered as characterization through internal action, shows how brave Moana is and that she is also a risk-taker. As Evans and Davies (2009) define, a risk taker is “willing to take a chance on personal safety or reputation to achieve a goal” (p.17). This is particularly reflected from the line “*From the great unknown, where I go alone, where I long to be*”. This song also indicates that Moana is a

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Portrayal of Moana

The analysis of the characterization of Moana reveals that she possesses the following traits: brave, adventurous, ambitious, smart, independent, rebellious, loving, assertive, affectionate, nurturing, and decisive.

Moana shows her bravery throughout her journey. This is reflected in her song when she sets on her journey and left her village.

decisive person: “*Every turn I take, every trail I track / Is a choice I make, now I can't turn back*”. Evans and Davies (2009) define decisiveness as “quick to consider options/situation and make up mind” (p.17). Additionally, this song highlights Moana's determination to start her journey even though she is all by herself.

As the story progresses, Moana's assertiveness is shown. This is

particularly reflected from her action towards Maui. Being assertive, according to Evans and Davies (2009) is “taking charge of a situation,

making plans and issuing instructions” (p.17) which in this case shows that Moana is the one who is in charge and instructs Maui.



Figure 1. Moana holds up her paddle towards Maui

Figure 1 shows Moana forcing Maui to help her return the heart of Te Fiti. Even though at first Moana seems scared, she manages to overcome it and force Maui to help her. Apart from being assertive, Moana is also portrayed as someone who is independent, because she manages to survive on the sea. As the journey progresses, Moana becomes more

independent and skillful in directing the boat. Moana’s independence can be associated with Evans and Davies’ term of being self-reliant, which they define as “can accomplish tasks or handle situations alone with confidence” (p.17). It is shown when Moana is able to handle the situation calmly when left alone on the sea.



Figure 2. Moana is fixing her boat without anyone's help

As her boat was broken because of Te Ka, who is the main antagonist of the story, she manages to repair it by herself since Maui left her alone on the sea. This scene also shows that Moana is an ambitious character. Even though Maui left her, her ambition to return the heart of Te Fiti and save her people remain. She will do anything to fulfill her ambition.

Other than that, Moana is portrayed as rebellious; this can be

Moana: An older rule, when there were fish.

Chief Tui: A rule that keep us safe!

Moana: But Dad!

Chief Tui: Instead of endangering our people so you can run right back to the water! Every time I think you're past this. No one goes beyond the reef! (14:36 – 14:40)

seen through her act of opposing her father's will. Since Moana was a child, Moana wanted to sail but her father prohibits her from sailing. At the beginning of the movie, Moana is shown to raise her voice towards her father in disagreement. The excerpt below is taken when Moana is arguing with her father about fishing over the reef.



Figure 3. Moana is arguing with her father

Figure 3 shows Moana arguing with her father about fishing beyond the reef. Moana raises her voice to show her disagreement,

showing a rebellious side of her character. Her action of sailing by her own is also one proof of her rebelliousness.



Figure 4. Moana sailing by her own

As her rebelliousness takes over, she goes ahead with sailing on her own, to prove that the sea is safe to her father. Unfortunately, she then got hit by a wave which breaks her boat.

Additionally, Moana is also portrayed as a smart character, as can

Maui : Little girl, I am a hero.

Moana : Maybe you were but now . Now you're just the guy who stole the heart of Te Fiti. The guy who cursed the world. Don't know one fellow. No one. But, put this back. Save the world. You'd be everyone's hero.

In this conversation, Moana's smart nature is shown. She finally manages

to be seen through her ideas to achieve her goals. Since Moana realizes that she needs Maui's help, she resolutely persuades Maui by tempting him that he will be a hero of all.

to persuade Maui to help her to restore the heart of Te Fiti.



Figure 5. Moana tries to find another way to go past through Te Ka

Figure 5 shows that Moana is not only smart, but she is also fearless. Moana knows that she does not stand a chance to go head to head against Te Ka, but because of her brilliance to

find another way to reach her 'destination', she manages to go past through Te Ka.

The above discussed characteristics tend to emphasize

Moana's "masculine" side. However, she has also been portrayed as someone who is caring and loving because she always love others

around her. Even though there is an aspect of rebelliousness inside her, she always loves her parents.



Figure 6. Moana and her parents hug each other

Figure 6 shows Moana is hugging her parents after going into a very long journey. She realizes her rebelliousness at the end of the story, and said sorry to her parents. This

shows she really loves her parents. Even though she started the journey by rebelling against her father, deep inside she always loves him.

Villager: I'm curious about that chicken eating the rock. He seems to lack the

basic intelligence required for pretty much everything.

Should we maybe

just cook him?

Moana: Sometimes our strength lies beneath the surface. Far beneath in some

cases. But I'm sure there's more to Heihei than meets the eye.

The above excerpt shows that her love is not only towards other people, but also towards animals. She ‘defends’ her chicken in front of other people.

Even in the middle of the movie, she shows her nurturing nature by rescuing Heihei from Kakamora, as shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Moana saves Heihei from Kakamora

Moana: Subversion or Confirmation of Gender Stereotypes?

As has been elaborated in the previous section, Moana has been portrayed as someone who possesses the following traits: brave, adventurous, ambitious, rebellious, smart, self-reliant, fearless, assertive, and decisive. Additionally, she is also

portrayed as loving, nurturing and tender. Relating these traits to Evans and Davies’s and Copenhaver’s gender traits, Moana can be seen as having both masculine and feminine traits. Below is the identification and classification of Moana’s characteristics according to the stereotypical gender traits:

Table 4. Moana’s traits classification

Masculine Traits	Feminine Traits
Brave	Loving
Adventurous	Tender
Independent	Nurturing
Ambitious	
Assertive	
Decisive	
Rebellious	
Smart	
Fearless	

Table 4 shows that Moana possesses nine masculine traits and three feminine traits. This analysis shows that she is different from most female main characters in children’s film because her masculine traits dominate the feminine traits. As she is portrayed differently from other main characters of Disney’s films, such as Snow White from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), Cinderella from *Cinderella* (1950) and Princess Aurora from *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), this can be seen as a step forward in children’s film. Such a portrayal seems to indicate a positive attempt to fight against gender stereotyping in children’s film. This is important for

the film industry to take into account and avoid being ‘perpetuators’ of gender stereotypes. Furthermore, Moana denies Brannon’s (2016) statement that women who do not have the traditional characteristics of *The Cult of True Womanhood* will have no real meaning in life and will not gain happiness and power. In the film, Moana proves that even though she does not conform to the idea of “the cult of true womanhood”, she can still be powerful and happy. Moana shows that she has the power to save her people and island.

Two previous studies, which both analyzes Disney movies, are particularly relevant to the present

study. The study that was conducted by Khairunnisa (2017) shows similar results, but the one conducted by Streiff and Dundes (2017) indicates different findings their research concludes that *Moana* (2016) does perpetuate gender stereotypes that have been built by Disney. This seems to have occurred because Streiff and Dundes did not only focus on Moana, as they also analyzed other characters, such as Maui, Te Ka, and Tamatoa. Despite some shifts of how the main female character is portrayed in *Moana*, the male gender stereotypes might still remain.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze how the main character is portrayed in the film and analyze the gender stereotypes attached to her. The study analyzes the portrayal of Moana by using characterization in films theory, and analyzes the gender stereotypes attached through gender stereotypes theory. The finding shows that Moana as the main character portrayed as someone who is brave, adventurous, ambitious, rebellious, smart, self-reliant, fearless, assertive, and

decisive. And she is also portrayed as loving, nurturing, tender and affectionate. As Evans and Davies (2009) and Copenhaver (2002) propose several traits attached to each gender as a guidance, it can be seen that Moana subverts female gender stereotypes in Disney films. In addition, the finding also proves that Brannon's (2016) statement is not true, women who do not have the characteristics of *The Cult of True Womanhood* can be happy and also powerful.

This movie shows that Disney try to avoid perpetuating gender stereotype. However, it only applied to the main character. It might be different if it is applied into the whole character in the film such as Maui, Te Ka, or even Moana's mother. Furthermore, this study opens up a possibility in the further research to analyze not only the gender stereotypes attached to the main character, but also other characters.

REFERENCES

Arnheim, R. (1957). *Film as art*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Brannon, L. (2016). *Gender: Psychological perspectives*. Taylor & Francis. Retrieved from: http://www.ablongman.com/partners_in_psych/PDFs/Brannon/Brannon_ch07.pdf
- Boldry, J., Wood, W., & Kashy, D. A. (2002). Gender stereotypes and the evaluation of men and women in military training. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), 689-705.
- Carli, L. L., Alawa, L., Lee, Y., Zhao, B., & Kim, E. (2016). Stereotypes about women, men, and scientists.
- Copenhaver, B. B. (2002). A portrayal of gender and a description of gender roles in selected American modern and postmodern plays. (Unpublished master's thesis). East Tennessee State University. Retrieved from <http://dc.etsu.edu/etd/632>
- Kimsey, C. M. (2011). Gender stereotypes bias in dystopian young adult literature (Unpublished master's thesis). University of North Carolina. Retrieved from <https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/indexable/content/uuid:34a7dafa-1bb9-48ad-8bb0-6d3571706522>.
- Kitch, C. (1999). Destructive women and little men: Masculinity, the new woman, and power in 1910s Popular Media. Retrieved from <https://aejmcmagazine.arizona.edu/Journal/Spring1999/Kitch.pdf>.
- Kolker, R. P. (2002). *Film, form, and culture*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Krahn, K. (2015). Reel women: gender stereotypes in film (Doctoral dissertation). Eastern Michigan University, USA. Retrieved from: <http://commons.emich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2015&context=theses>
- Mack, N., Woodson, C., MacQueen, K. M., Guest, G., & Namey, E. (2005). *Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide*. Family Health International.
- Mou, Y., & Peng, W. (2008). Gender and racial stereotypes in popular video games. Retrieved from https://msu.edu/~pengwei/Mou&Peng_gender_and_racial_stereotype.pdf.
- Murnen, S. K., Greenfield, C., Younger, A., & Boyd, H. (2016). Boys act and girls appear: A content analysis of gender stereotypes associated with characters in children's popular culture. *Sex roles*, 74(1-2), 78-91. Retrieved from: <https://nature.berkeley.edu/garbelottoat/wp-content/uploads/murnen-et-al-2106.pdf>
- Nelmes, J. (2012). *An introduction to film studies*. London: Routledge.
- Petrie, D. W., & Boggs, J. M. (2006). *The art of watching films*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Rimmon-Kenan, S. (2002). *Narrative fiction: Contemporary poetics*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Stoller, R. J. (1990). *Sex and gender*.
Karnac.
Streff, M., & Dundes, L. (2017).
From shapeshifter to lava
monster: Gender stereotypes in
Disney's Moana. Retrieved

from
<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0760/6/3/91/pdf>.
Streff, M., & Dundes, L. (2017).
Frozen in time: How Disney
gender-