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ANIMATED FILMS AS A SPACE FOR PRESENTING AND CONTESTING MASCULINITY

Abstract. Animated movies can be treated as one of the forms of cultural transmission that can be a source of gender stereotypes. Therefore, they are involved in the process of constructing images of femininity and masculinity, especially among young viewers. The author of this article presents what are, in his opinion, the most popular ways of categorizing masculinity, and then juxtaposes them with the typology of masculine characters presented in contemporary animated films. The empirical material used in the study is based on a qualitative content analysis carried out on the fifteen most popular titles from the years 2011–2015. Certain difficulties regarding the description of the characters presented in animated films, using categories from classical theories of masculinity, are indicated. The author presents a new category of masculinity – selective masculinity.

Keywords: masculinity, animated films, gender stereotypes, gender studies, men’s studies.

Introduction

From a very early age, children are taught to function in a reality that continuously creates and reconstructs cultural differences between girls and boys. One of the processes that has an influence on the persistence of this distinction is gender socialization. When introducing their children to a dichotomous gender division, parents tend to utilize certain gender stereotypes, which can be described as “stiff, simplified patterns of behavior and attitudes, defined within a society” (Goldenson, Anderson 1994, cited in: Grabowska 2007: 20). The source of these stereotypes is, among other things, cultural messages, including animated films.

Krzysztof Arcimowicz and Katarzyna Citko (2009: 148) state that the essential ambition of filmmakers has always been to reflect reality, as well as to create patterns of behavior and attitudes. Therefore, films become one of the numerous sources of socio-cultural influences that are acknowledged as key in the process of constructing a gender identity. According to Michael Kimmel, “if masculinity is

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socially constructed, one of the most basic elements of this construction is presenting masculinity in the media” (Kimmel 1992: 11–12).

The aim of this article is to categorize the male characters presented in contemporary animated films. In my deliberations I employ various forms of describing masculinity. The most popular concepts are juxtaposed with the typology of male characters which appears in animated movies, with the object of determining on this basis what types of masculinity are applied by animation creators.

Masculinity categorization

In order to conduct an analysis of male characters presented in animated movies, it is necessary to take a closer look at how masculinity is described and how its typology is constructed. For the needs of this article, I am going to present a selection of most commonly employed concepts.

The classical theory describing men and masculinity is the idea of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995). The essential assumption made by this sociologist is that there is no one commonly occurring masculinity. The co-occurrence of masculinities entails that, according to the author, relations based on power and submission are bound to occur between them. This corresponds to the fact that gender order cannot “relate merely to men’s dominance over women, but also some types of masculinity being dominant over others, depending on the socio-cultural context” (Kluczyńska 2017: 16).

Connell’s typology is grounded in a hierarchic system. Masculinities that are included in this system are defined or redefined in respect of hegemonic masculinity, which constitutes a kind of a normative paradigm, which “can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell 1995: 77). Hegemonic masculinity is expressed by aggression, strength, physical fitness, heterosexuality, affluence and power.

The pursuit of hegemonic masculinity causes multiple inconveniences to individuals. The lack of the ability to follow the requirements or to comply with numerous restrictions arising from it may stem from an individual’s characteristics, as well as the social roles he needs to perform. In such a situation, positive or negative references to hegemonic masculinity are decisive for a man’s place in this system.

Complicit masculinity can be characterized by the ineffective pursuit of hegemonic masculinity, while simultaneously acknowledging its values. Within this category, individuals are able to make use of certain specific advantages regarding women’s submission, while at the same time full acceptance when it comes to patriarchal division has enabled the development of a masculinity which avoids submission to the normative paradigm. Therefore, it is not viewed as “incomplete masculinity” (Connell 1995: 79).

Subordinated masculinity is differently interpreted. Individuals who do not want to or cannot follow this hegemonic pattern for some reason (e.g. due to their sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability) are symbolically associated with femininity (Kluczyńska 2017: 17).

Critics of this concept indicate that the traditional image of a man distinguished in hegemonic masculinity can be less frequently acknowledged as congruent with reality. “Public space, space where men presented and proved their own masculinity according to custom, was homogenous when it comes to race, gender, constituting a homosocial world, where white, heterosexual people could be themselves” (Kluczyńska 2009: 110) is undergoing significant alternations. Inclusive masculinity by Eric Anderson (2009) may be an answer to this state of affairs.

The author implies that the contemporary acceptance of behavioral forms and attitudes prevents one dominant type of masculinity from staying in power. This conclusion is based on the fact that *homo-hysteria*, which for the needs of this article is understood as creating a taboo around men expressing femininity, is fading. As a result, rivalry for hegemony, and the masculinity hierarchy itself, ceases to occur (Kluczyńska 2017: 24–26).

The theory proposed by Anderson suggests that there is a horizontal arrangement, within which traditional and inclusive masculinities coexist. Inclusive masculinity is understood as that which includes hitherto marginalized types of masculinity. The consequence of this approach is the assumption that the disparities between men and women are constantly reducing (Kluczyńska 2017: 26).

Masculinity may also be problematized within certain spheres of social life or products of culture. From this article’s perspective, the methods of its categorization in relation to media message are essential. Urszula Kluczyńska (2009: 119) distinguishes three images of men present in the media: (1) *the old man*, (2) *the new man* and (3) *the new lad*.

The researcher states that “the new man and new lad represent masculinity constructs two dominant in the previous decade, and although numerous attempts were made to define and classify masculinity, none of them successfully described and captured shifts in the area of gender in media messages” (Kluczyńska 2009: 128).

The body of “a new man” is sexually charged, often in circumstances or poses traditionally viewed as feminine. Overly careful selection of outfits and excessive attention to appearance is considered to go beyond the neatness characteristic of the traditional male image. This view on masculinity has become something right and acceptable. Muscularity, which in the past symbolized strength, currently emphasizes the fact that an individual takes pride in his fit, aesthetic build, does fashionable sports and uses the necessary gadgets. This type of masculinity can also be depicted as unisexual. What is symptomatic about this is the fact that finding in oneself subtleness and sensitivity, features incongruent with the image of a traditional man, should be perceived as an advantage (Kluczyńska 2009: 120–122).

The “new man” can be characterized as emotional, sensitive, narcissistic. His attitude towards women can be described as supporting gender equality. However, there are suspicions that this image is only a creation of the media, and there is no distinct representation of this type of a man in the social space (Kluczyńska 2009: 124).

The characteristics of “a new lad” may be understood as an answer to the process of feminizing modern man. The attitude of objectifying women is clearly visible here. It is manifested by a return to the macho image and his hedonistic approach connected to this image. In reference to patriarchy, a certain dose of irony can be found, as well as a nostalgia for more power and female submission (Kluczyńska 2009: 125).

A significant element distinguishing “the new lad” from traditional images of men is his partial withdrawal from the public sphere. His occupation does not determine him anymore; his leisure time has superseded it. What is more, prominent elements of his image are lack of aspirations in life and his disregard for the obstacles he encounters in his everyday life (Kluczyńska 2009: 125, 128).

The aforementioned concepts and images cannot be applied when analyzing animated movies without remembering that, due to the age and social competences of their main recipients, character portrayals must be presented in a less obvious way; one therefore searches in vain for direct reference to homophobia. This does not mean that these characters are not depicted as having clear, strong and conspicuous characteristics, but it is to be expected that screenwriters will avoid images that could be perceived as unsuitable or inappropriate for children.

Literature appertaining to the gender roles presented in cartoons, fairy tales and animated films, especially Polish language ones, concentrates to a great extent on female characters and the image of femininity (see Suchowierska, Eichelberger 2012; Szczuka 2001). Men appear as points of reference; this is why they are not characterized in such detail as female characters. Male features most often encompass competitiveness, self-sufficiency and confidence. The characters are assigned to the public sphere, where viewers can generally watch them engaged in dynamic and perilous adventures. It is emphasized that male characters are over-represented on the screen, and that main roles are played by males (Lemish 2008: 101). Arcimowicz (2003: 30) labels this image of a man the traditional one.

At the same time, the researcher indicates that in Western culture two paradigms coexist and compete with each other. The alternative to the traditional image of a man is a new paradigm which emphasizes the ideas of equality and partnership. Its characteristic element draws on the concept of androgyny (Arcimowicz, Citko 2009: 44). This is based on the idea that an individual can combine and emphasize features traditionally considered male and female (Bem 2000: 118). It should be assumed, therefore, that both of them will influence animation filmmakers.

Arkadiusz Lewicki (2011: 148–158) highlighted the transition between the traditional and new paradigm of masculinity in the depiction of animated characters. He uses the example of *The Lion King* to describe a movie presenting conservative

values, as well as a division of male and female roles that is traditional for patriarchy. The opposite depiction can be found in the series of animated films about Shrek's adventures, which "symbolically frees itself from traditional paradigms attributed to men" (Lewicki 2011: 153). The plot of the following sequels underlines the importance of men having self-awareness and verbalizing their feelings, and shows the dilemmas faced by a man who jumps into being a husband and an committed father.

The traditional and the new paradigms are therefore noticeable in contemporary animated movies. Authors of academic research underline the fact that they exist, using selected, single examples. Due to this approach, analyses of male characters may concentrate only on main characters, and their descriptions could be applied to other characters. An image of male characters thereby emerges as belonging to a homogenic category, and because of that, all the characters who appear in such a film will be interpreted as presenting the same type of masculinity.

To broaden the perspective regarding male characters portrayed in animated movies, it is necessary to analyze and characterize a larger number of characters. This will enable the complexity and variety of these characters in animated movies to be presented. Descriptions will allow us to attempt to define the masculinity category presented by them. Only in this way will it be possible to present the broader spectrum of male images shown to children.

Research methodology

The choice of animated movies selected for the research was based on the criterion of their popularity. In order to determine which items were most commonly chosen by children and their parents, the *behavior.pl* website was used. The list of the most popular animated movies was limited to the period of 2011–2015. The first thirteen films that met these requirements were chosen. The research materials were later extended by two further items – the most popular Christmas animations that premiered in the given time period.

The research material included the following titles: *Frozen* (2013), *How to Train Your Dragon 2* (2014), *Inside Out* (2015), *Brave* (2012), *Madagascar 3* (2012), *Big Hero 6* (2014), *Ice Age: Continental Drift* (2012), *Despicable Me 3* (2013), *Hotel Transylvania* (2012), *Monsters University* (2013), *The Penguins of Madagascar* (2014), *Puss in Boots* (2011), *Kung Fu Panda 2* (2011), *Arthur Christmas* (2011), *Little Brother*, *Big Trouble* (2012).

The subjects of the research were chosen from the characters that appeared in the first and last fifteen minutes of each movie. This was due the plot structure most commonly applied in case of animated movies. The beginning of a movie is traditionally intended to introduce the story, present the main protagonists, outline their origins and indicate their future fate. The second analyzed section is the close of

a film, which includes the climax and the denouement. The villain's fate is revealed to the viewer and, furthermore, the moral of the story is revealed. What is more, through introducing the effect of priority and freshness, it is easier for children to remember the characters introduced in these parts.

Male characters who appeared on screen were taken as a unit of analysis,. It is worth mentioning that the leading characters and supporting characters were taken into consideration. Only minor characters in the plot were excluded from this analysis. A total of seventy-four characters were analyzed.

In the course of the qualitative analysis of the contents, a categorization key was created, in compliance with the inductive approach (Szczepaniak 2012: 99). This key referred to the following aspects: the character's appearance, mode of behavior, involvement in the action and influence on the plot, attitude towards the environment, relations with other characters, and evaluation on the scale of good and evil. In the case of the villains, the punishment they receive was also taken into consideration.

Male characters' categories

The analysis of the research materials allowed six categories of male characters that appeared on the screen to be distinguished. The key element of the characters' description that provided the basis for specifying and labelling each category was the role they played in terms of the plot development.

In the descriptions of male characters' categories, a term "team" appears. This results from the fact that the main protagonist in animated films is frequently accompanied by a solid, invincible and steady circle of companions. These teams may be associated with groups of friends and are composed so that a variety of characteristics and dynamics are portrayed. Their invincibility stems from very rarely encountered scenes, where one of the team members leaves his companions, or the group is extended by a new character.

Table 1. Percentage distribution of the distinguished male characters' categories in the research materials

Category	Number of characters within the category	Percentage of characters in this category
Subordinate characters	19	25
Formalist characters	16	22
Comical characters	15	20
Heroic characters	9	12
Redefined characters	8	11
Adversarial characters	7	10

Source: Author's own study.

Subordinate characters

This group encompasses supporting characters. Even though they take part in action sequences that are key to the plot and the moral that emerges of the story, they can be characterized by insufficient level of subjectivity, which does not allow them to play significant parts. This implies that these characters can be easily recognized and remembered by a viewer, and certain events could be difficult to illustrate without their appearance, however the subordinate characters themselves remain passive while the other team members act. This group of characters is represented by: Werewolf (*Hotel Transylvania*), Santa (*Arthur Christmas*), Marty (*Madagascar*), Diego (*Ice Age 4*).

Their mode of functioning in the plot is a reflection of more prominent characters. Their role is reduced to the role of a rank-and-file team member. They raise the significance of key moments by following the main protagonist, so that his aptitude for motivating, inspiring and effectiveness of giving orders to others is emphasized in crucial scenes.

No features specific for their appearance can be distinguished. The way these characters are presented in the moments closely connected with emotions is significant. Their reactions are delayed, they seem not to comprehend the significance of a certain situation and only after observing, e.g. the main character, do they adjust their behavior to the circumstances.

The characters' evaluation on the scale of good and evil cannot be made without referring to the character who inspires the subordinate characters' behavior. Due to the fact that these characters lack self-reliance, and there is a clearly observable dependence on other members of the team, they can usually be recognized as neutral characters.

Formalist characters

The authors of animated films' screenplays introduce formalist characters to the plot mainly in order to ensure constant, not necessarily dynamic, developments of the plot. Their actions can be characterized by a great deal of consistency and calm. They owe the high level of rationality to the ability to plan and predict the consequences of their and their team members' actions. This group is represented by Shifu (*Kung Fu Panda*), Steve (*Arthur Christmas*), Hiccup (*How to Train Your Dragon 2*) and Vlad (*Hotel Transylvania*).

One of the distinctive features common to this group of characters is their noticeable sobriety. Formalist characters can be also distinguished by their high level of independence. They are self-reliant, serene, yet decisive, and their deeds have visible influence on the fate of other characters. They avoid dynamic plot twists, hardly ever taking the initiative in the group.

Their actions are motivated by personal gain and they often persuade their companions to accompany them in order to achieve their own goals. It can therefore be noticed that these are individuals characterized by both selfishness and empathy. This can be observed in scenes where reaching a goal becomes more important than the relations with other characters.

This image is complemented by moments in which the group or the character succeeds. Celebration is limited to brief smiles or gestures expressing victory, and soon after this moment they revert to their customary concentration. Intense emotions are superseded by rationally strategizing the next stages of the overall plan.

The consistency they act with and the recurring element of luck result in the success of the plans they devise. This is of particular importance, taking into consideration that one of the most basic functions performed by these characters is to be involved in organizing rescue operations. Their role in the course of rescue activities is rather specific, as their daring and heroic actions are rather limited. The authors focus mainly on the characters' artifice and courage, and the fact that thanks to all the careful planning all the dangers are evaded.

Another significant attribute of these characters is their attitude towards the remaining members of the team. All of them are treated in an equal way by the formalist character, regardless of their sex or position in the group. Quite often viewers can observe a lack of understanding when it comes to the emotions expressed by their companions. This stems from the fact that they themselves are not governed by emotions in the course of their actions. They are normally guided by their own moral code. Viewers can get the impression that these individuals are not especially socially skilled, which makes it difficult for viewers to form an attachment to them. Nevertheless, these characters can be evaluated as positive ones.

Comical characters

The basic function of the characters who belong to this group is to make viewers laugh. The examples include Private (*The Penguins of Madagascar*), Olaf (*Frozen*), King Julien (*Madagascar 3*), Sid the Sloth (*Ice Age 4*).

Their appearance is often exaggerated to some extent. This makes it easier for children to focus attention on them. Significantly, less subtle drawing, distorted proportions or the colours used to create them, never suggest a serious or aggressive character. The characters' serenity is noticeable. Their bodies, in comparison to those of other characters, are clearly smaller. Moreover, they are deprived of features which could suggest strength, e.g. well-defined muscles, and they are also distinctly shorter than others. Comical characters are also portrayed as very slender, or overly obese.

Another aspect that makes them different from all the other characters is the age of these comical characters. At first glance, it is clear that the creators aimed to present these characters as a little younger or considerably older than the remaining protagon-

nists. Lack of independence might also be striking. Although comical characters make their appearance on the screen quite often, they almost invariably appear to be lost, partially absent and seem not to comprehend the circumstances around them. This is emphasized by the fact that their appearance alone on the screen is reduced to the minimum. Almost every scene with a comical character depicts a group of characters. This is because comical characters feel better in a group and they submit themselves to the decisions the group make. These are individuals who never take the initiative in order to set out the course of action or delegate tasks to other team members.

Another factor which matches the exaggerated appearance of a comical character is his vigorous physical activity. The clearly depicted energy of a comical character is never associated with aggression or logical performance under pressure. They are shown as cowardly, tending to avoid being involved in open conflicts. Even when confronting the main character's antagonist, they evade the use of physical force. Importantly, their behavior of violence and a high level of empathy make them move to the background when tension rises.

The fundamental task attributed to these characters is to relieve tension. The climax of each significant scene usually ends up with the amusing adventures of comical characters. These scenes defuse the situation and serve as a framing device, which indicates necessary changes in the characters' behavior.

When following their adventures, viewers may get the impression that each success they achieve is rather coincidental, stemming from a stroke of good fortune, rather than from their competences. The characters themselves seem not to comprehend the source of their success and are usually astonished by the final course of events. When facing defeat, the feeling of sorrow, fear and lack of hope are explicitly present. Comical characters are desperate for another character to show them the right direction.

This form of dependence often underlines the high level of honesty and sensitivity of these characters. Comical characters promptly and implicitly get attached to their companions. Their openness and gregariousness are employed to express the values of honesty and veracity. They are particular about the equal status of team members, including women.

Comical characters do not undergo any noticeable changes. Their personal features and behavior remain steady throughout the whole plot. Viewers can perceive them, on the scale of good and evil, only as positive characters.

Heroic characters

The main task the creators of animation assign to heroic characters is display bravado, which is crucial to the dynamics and the swift development of the action. In this group we can name the following characters: Anger (*Inside Out*), Puss in Boots (*Puss in Boots*), Skipper (*The Penguins of Madagascar*) and Sullivan (*Monsters University*).

The characters' appearance confirms their fondness of robust action. Heroic characters are endowed with attributes, e.g. a weapon, which reflects that they are strong, dangerous and fearless. Their bodies are built in compliance with two schemes. The first one is based on their clearly defined musculature and a body that is disproportionately large in comparison to their companions; whereas the second one stands in contrast to the first: their inconspicuous body is a form of camouflage, and the true face of this character is revealed only in situations which require courage. The common features for these two archetypes are noticeable sobriety and the absence of a smile.

The most distinct trait in case of the characters who belong to this group is their independence. Heroic characters who, in the face of a difficult situation, are forced to use the help of their fellows, see these circumstances as their failure. That sort of misadventure is fast forgotten, due to the fact that the weakness shown almost instantly contributes to the creation of a new plan of action.

When the sense of failure does not result from the shown weakness, but rather a lost battle which has serious consequences, their reaction is diametrically opposed. Then, these characters break down, lose faith in their self-efficacy and begin to withdraw from their leadership position.

Daring actions which end in success do not have a clear impact on the behavior of heroic characters. Reticence when it comes to showing emotions and a high level of self-confidence are interpreted as full confidence in the success of the plan.

Circumstances that allow a character's a full range of skills and characteristic features to be presented are battle scenes and confrontations with a villain, as well as spectacular rescue operations connected with them. In such cases, the characters are presented as self-sacrificing and devoted members of a team, foolhardy and having disregard for risk.

In their relations with women, heroic characters display a macho image and attitude. Their self-confidence, often paired with eminence, puts them in the centre of the group, constantly striving to subordinate their comrades.

Despite the fact that none of these characters can be identified as evil, they cannot be evaluated as unambiguously good.

Redefined characters

The role given to these characters is primarily based on a transformation they undergo. This transformation will shift the perception of these characters in the eyes of viewers, and have a major impact on the plot development. Very often the moment of their change is connected with the story's climax. The examples include Niko (*Little Brother, Big Trouble*), Hiro (*Big Hero 6*), and Humpty Dumpty (*Puss in Boots*).

The transformation which is characteristic for these characters is one of their rare common features, because there are hardly any motifs related to their

appearance, age or body build. A similar variety is also present in the scheme of the transformation. Here, again, there is no homogenous measure applied by the creators to portray redefined characters. The constant denominator that links the characters is the fact that each of them undergoes a change for the better. It happens no matter what the aspect of their behavior or disposition is modified in the climax. What is more, positive changes do not mean that all the depicted characters were evaluated as evil before. The motif of transformation refers to two types of men – the villain's sidekick, who decides to turn his back on his mastermind, and members of the team who were viewed as positive characters, whose features, e.g. courage, get reasserted.

Redefined characters often participate in rescue operations. Each representative of this group gets involved in at least one of them. Usually the moment of finding courage in himself for heroic deeds coincides with the explicit trouble experienced by the main character. The transformation these characters undergo allows them to stand up for the protagonist and reverse the crisis situation.

One of characteristic features of some of the selected transformed characters are their relations with women. Their heroic acts and the change they undergo often result from them making an attempt to save a lady. Interestingly, these attempts are never directly successful, however the consequence they lead to has a positive impact on improving the situation of the rescued female character.

Due to the fact that the transformation always leads to the improvement of the character's image, including the characters who at the beginning of the story might have been perceived as the negative ones, these characters have a chance to redeem themselves in the eyes of viewers. Significantly, in this case the rule of inevitable punishment is repealed. On the whole, all the representatives of this category can be evaluated positively.

Adversarial characters

The task adversarial characters are appointed with is to stand in opposition to the main protagonist and his companions. Each of these characters is described in a negative way on the scale of good and evil. The examples are Hans (*Frozen*), Lord Shen (*Kung Fu Panda 2*), Professor Callaghan (*Big Hero 6*), Dave (*The Penguins of the Madagascar*).

The appearance of the characters who belong to this group often resembles that of heroic characters. Their sobriety is highlighted, and their overall appearance indicates their grim disposition. Expressing emotions is not natural for them, and a frown of disapproval on their faces adds extra accentuation to their negative attitude towards other characters. Their size and physique are usually exaggerated, they are often marked with scars and carry a weapon, which suggests their readiness for a fight.

Villains can be described as superior and avoiding contact with other characters. Their noticeable composure and self-absorption underline deeply rooted motifs resulting from the conflict with the main character.

Their efforts to take control over the protagonist, irrespective of whether this is a success or failure for them, trigger fairly similar reactions. The close of a short battle is often highlighted with exaggerated laughter and hiding, often metaphorically depicted as retreating into the shadows or off screen. The character's appearance on the screen is often very dynamic and is accompanied by an element of surprise, whilst their disappearance seems to be stretched over time in order to emphasize the unabated threat they pose. Apart from laughter, they are almost always presented as being exasperated.

Their negative approach towards the world is not only expressed while demonstrating their relationships with selected characters. Viewers can get the impression that the villains are not fond of all the characters who appear in the story, including the ones who assist them. Due to this, they do not enter into any enduring relationships. This also applies to women. One of the exceptions observed may be the desire for vengeance, motivated by the harm suffered by a beloved woman. The distant time that this event occurred in is always emphasized, which allows us to assume that the adversarial character is not able to enter into close contacts with others anymore.

The characteristic pattern that relies on abrupt, quick battles makes it easy for viewers to get to know and remember their story very well, even though the villain only briefly appears on the screen.

Discussion

Applying the male typology presented in this article in order to analyze male characters in animated films turns out to pose a problem. Intuitively one could expect that traditional patterns, based on patriarchy, clearly distinguishing female and male characteristics would be dominant. The associations built around this issue, including for instance brave knights rescuing princesses, suggest that a man would be a character striving to subordinate women. A number of categories created for the needs of this analysis can be easily described in this manner.

In case of heroic characters, numerous manifestations of macho attitude, which clearly suggest subjecting women, could be found. A segment of redefined characters is also worth mentioning. Characters evaluated as positive, who at the critical moment gain courage and the ability to influence the subsequent course of the action and the fate of their companions, often owe their transformation to a desire to rescue a woman. This could be viewed as a need to prove their power and a driving force in the eyes of their potential beloved. However, the fact that these actions are never directly successful is symptomatic.

When it comes to adversarial characters, no direct behaviors suggesting attempts to subordinate female characters could be found. Significantly, there sometimes appears a motif of revenging a woman who had been loved by the villain, e.g. his daughter. This indicates the central position of a man, which is characteristic for patriarchy, as the one who is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their family members. Attempted revenge can be perceived as a form of “restoring their good name”, and, taking into consideration inevitable punishment, also atonement for the prior failure to fulfill their duties.

The categories of heroic and adversarial characters described here, as this analysis shows, can be characterized by similar traits. Calm and composure in circumstances that are neutral for the plot, and aggression and force manifested in a battle, are often complemented by clearly defined muscles, specific attributes (e.g. a weapon) and noticeable scars. A high level of independence is combined with a clear influence on the action’s dynamics and its development. The above-mentioned attitude towards women should be further developed, regarding practices connected to subjugating the remaining characters (members of the team or the villain’s sidekicks), which can symbolically correspond to subordinating other masculinity types. It can be therefore stated that heroic and adversarial characters exemplify the hegemonic type of masculinity in animated movies.

In case of the remaining character categories, their attitude towards women turned out to be neutral. What is more, assigning them to a described masculinity type poses a major problem.

Formalist characters, even though they are always key protagonists and possess the characteristics traditionally perceived as male by our culture, e.g. dignity, neatness, independence, thinking and planning logically, lack some of the characteristic features which could allow them to be placed in the group of hegemonic or complicit masculinity type. Characters within this category avoid taking the initiative, leading their team or becoming the centre of attention in a conscious way. They do not utilize force in their actions and keep away from any danger. They do not strive to dominate other characters and looking for any attitudes glorifying patriarchy would be in vain. Moreover, any actions taken by them are aimed at the wellbeing of the team.

Their features, traditionally considered to be male, reveal to a great extent the role they play in the course of the plot, which suggests that the formalist characters cannot be fitted into the inclusive masculinity category. A man who avoids being the centre of attention, abstains from expressing emotions, is focused on the task set for him, a task whose completion is not a matter of honour, ambition or display of strength and driving force, seems to be utilizing traditional characteristics in a pragmatic, selective way, without attachment to the possible values that result from them, and to the extent that he considers necessary for solving the problem. This type of masculinity can be described as selective.

This proposed type of masculinity can be distinguished by a specific gender order. Men characterized in this way do not attempt to make women and other types

of masculinities subordinate to them, however, they do not support the process of evening out the status of both sexes. The characteristic features they possess seem to be the outcome of conscious, pragmatic decisions.

The mode of structuring selective masculinity is based on a rational calculus of gains and losses which result from including other features in its image. These men seem to be aware of the fact that there are multiple types of masculinity. Therefore, their decisions may be wholly conscious. Such characteristics are selected in order to act efficiently and avoid potential difficulties resulting from, for example, being assigned to subordinate masculinity.

The description of comical characters in an attempt to determine masculinity type is also ambiguous. These are characters whose analysis is filled with contradictions. On the one hand, characteristics exhibited by them, traditionally described in our culture as female, are clearly visible. These encompass affectivity, tenderness, lack of driving force, lack of independence, gentle demeanour, avoiding conflicts. On the other hand, they demonstrate a strong link to the public sphere, a stable position in the protagonist's team, and a strong influence on the relations and morale of the group.

An element that is seemingly insignificant, yet key for understanding this type of masculinity, is the comical characters' lack of self-awareness. In her concept of hegemonic masculinity, Connell creates a hierarchical masculinity system, where certain masculinity types position themselves on the basis of submission and dominance. Anderson, on the other hand, introduces a horizontal model, indicating that there is a possibility of attitude and behavior inclusion. In the first case, a certain degree of an individual's awareness concerning his masculinity seems to be obligatory, taking into consideration the consequences deriving from the superior position of hegemonic masculinity. In the second case, any attempt to include any elements in one's masculinity, or reversely, distancing from this inclusion, involves a certain degree of reflection.

Comical characters seem, on the other hand, not to display any awareness or make any attempt to reflect on their masculinity. From this perspective, we can assume that they do not participate in the processes characteristic for the systems mentioned above. At the same time, the term *new man* does not match their description. The key aspect of their role in the plot is to create a safety anchor, and the features related to this role and structuring their masculinity seem to be coincidental to their awareness and their self-determination.

When it comes to the last two categories – subordinate and redefined characters – any attempts to define a particular masculinity type are unfounded. The former serves as a reflection of other characters' behaviors, especially when it comes to the main protagonist. Consequently, it might be concluded that this may exemplify a complicit masculinity type, however this would imply that every main character would be a representative of hegemonic masculinity, which is an erroneous conclusion. Redefined characters can be viewed as a collection of various masculinity

types, for as this analysis has demonstrated, there is not a pattern of transformation and the process itself is not characteristic for characters with a specified description.

What is more, the film creators' avoidance of unambiguity, mentioned above, is worth mentioning. In the research materials we can find examples of animated male characters who present the macho attitude, protagonists and their adversaries manifesting aggression in a battle, as well as comical characters with opposite characteristics. Notwithstanding the large diversity among the analyzed characters, there were no characters who manifest only the features customarily considered to be female. None of these categories was presented in a way which could clearly make viewers question their sex. This implies that animated film creators do not include characters who could be described as androgenic.

Summary

Animated movies present a complex and varied range of male characters and masculinity types to children. The joint efforts of the characters, the consequences which derive from their actions, together with the story's moral, often indicate that this diversity should be considered valuable by viewers. Therefore, animated films can influence the openness of young individuals towards different masculinity types in a positive way, also the types that are not typically found in traditional cultural codes. The conducted analysis demonstrated that the most popular means of defining masculinity types should not be thoughtlessly utilized to describe male characters in animated movies. The characters created by movie makers are not easily categorized. Their description is, to a great extent subject to the role they play in the story. Thanks to that, they can only partially refer to masculinity types present in the literature, or do not comply with their characteristics at all.

The genre's specificity is significant. Animated films present stories whose stylistic devices, protagonists, their adventures and the moral of the story need to be adjusted to the young age of the recipients. Certain features, characters' behaviors and the consequences resulting from them should be easy for children to interpret and refer to their own experience with gender socialization or to the activities of adults or a peer group.

The specifics of the recipients' group may also be the reason why the characters' categories mentioned in this study, do not respond to new analyses of male images present in the media. Neither *the new man* nor *the new lad*, as distinguished by Kluczyńska, had their counterparts among animated male characters. Their characteristics could be difficult to interpret and evaluated by children. For instance, the characteristics specific for *the new lad*, such as the combination of a macho image, hedonism, irony towards patriarchy and his withdrawal from the public sphere, as well as a nonchalant approach to obstacles he encounters in life, seem to be overly complex for young viewers.

Nevertheless, it should be underlined that the division into traditional and contemporary image of a man applied in the literature in order to describe male characters does not correspond to the variety and specificity of the characters created these days. From this perspective, the issue of masculinity present in films for children requires further, more in-depth analyses.

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Kacper Madej

TYPY MĘSKOŚCI PREZENTOWANE WE WSPÓŁCZESNYCH FILMACH ANIMOWANYCH

Abstrakt. Filmy animowane mogą być traktowane jako jedna z form przekazów kulturowych będących źródłem stereotypów płciowych. Biorą zatem udział w procesie konstruowania obrazu kobiecości oraz męskości, szczególnie wśród młodych odbiorców. Autor artykułu przedstawia najpopularniejsze jego zdaniem sposoby kategoryzowania męskości, następnie zestawia je z typologią postaci męskich prezentowanych we współczesnych filmach animowanych. Wykorzystany materiał empiryczny pochodzi z jakościowej analizy treści przeprowadzonej na piętnastu najpopularniejszych tytułach z lat 2011–2015. Wskazane zostały trudności z opisem bohaterów prezentowanych w filmach animowanych za pomocą kategorii pochodzących z klasycznych teorii męskości. Autor prezentuje nową kategorię męskości – męskość selektywną.

Słowa kluczowe: męskość, filmy animowane, stereotypy płciowe, socjologia płci, studia nad męskością, gender studies, men's studies.