

Gendered Borders in American and Japanese Animations:

The Portrayal of Masculinity and Femininity in Walt Disney and Studio Ghibli

Advisor: Dr. Yavari

By: Brendan Grover

Purpose Statement

- How gender, femininity, and masculinity are portrayed in Western (Walt Disney) and Japanese (Studio Ghibli) contexts
- Very few studies examine gender in a transnational context specifically Japan and America

Rationale

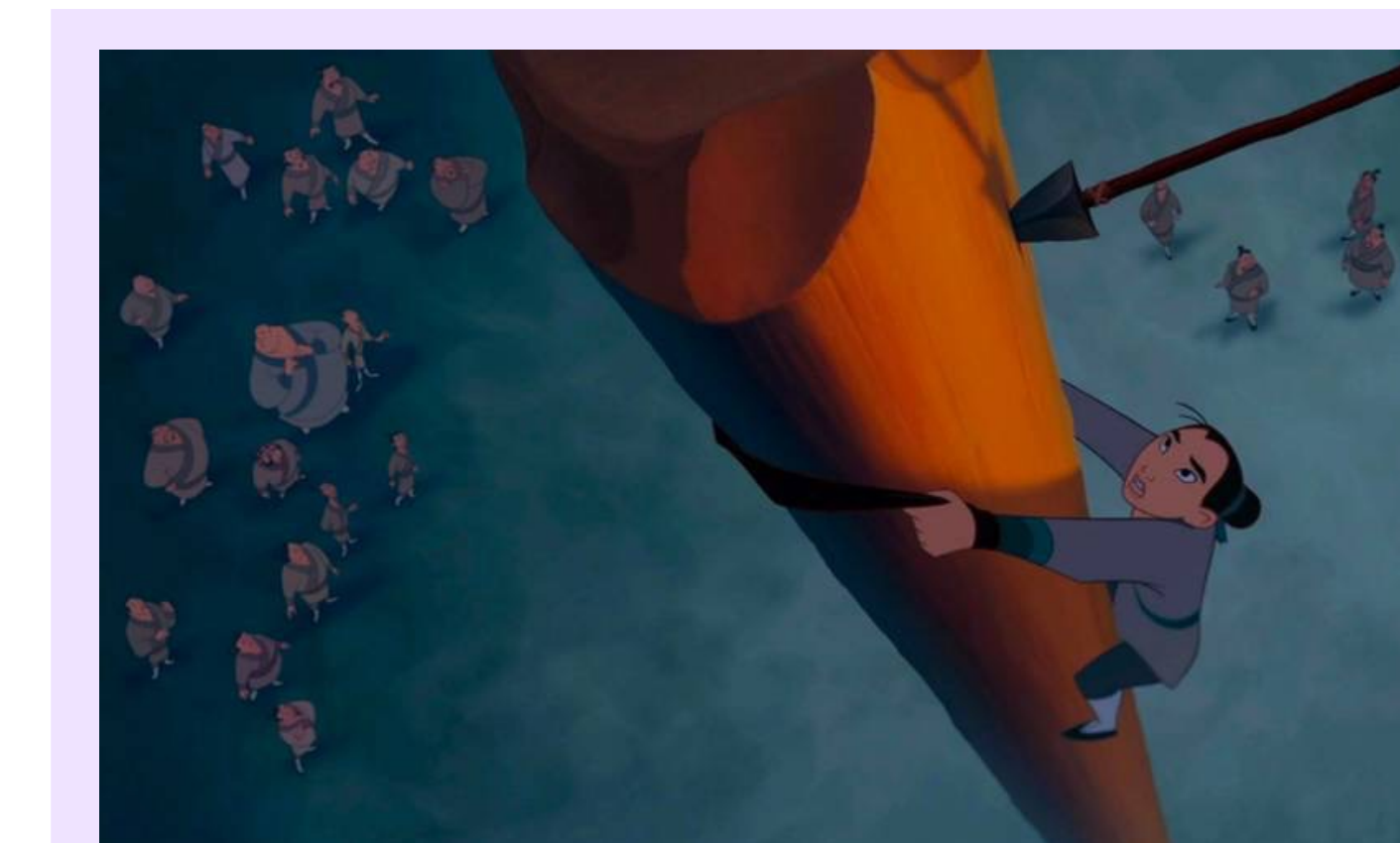
- Understand how gender is socially constructed
- Children are influenced by what they are commonly exposed to
- Bridge the gap in research about gender roles in a more transnational context

Method

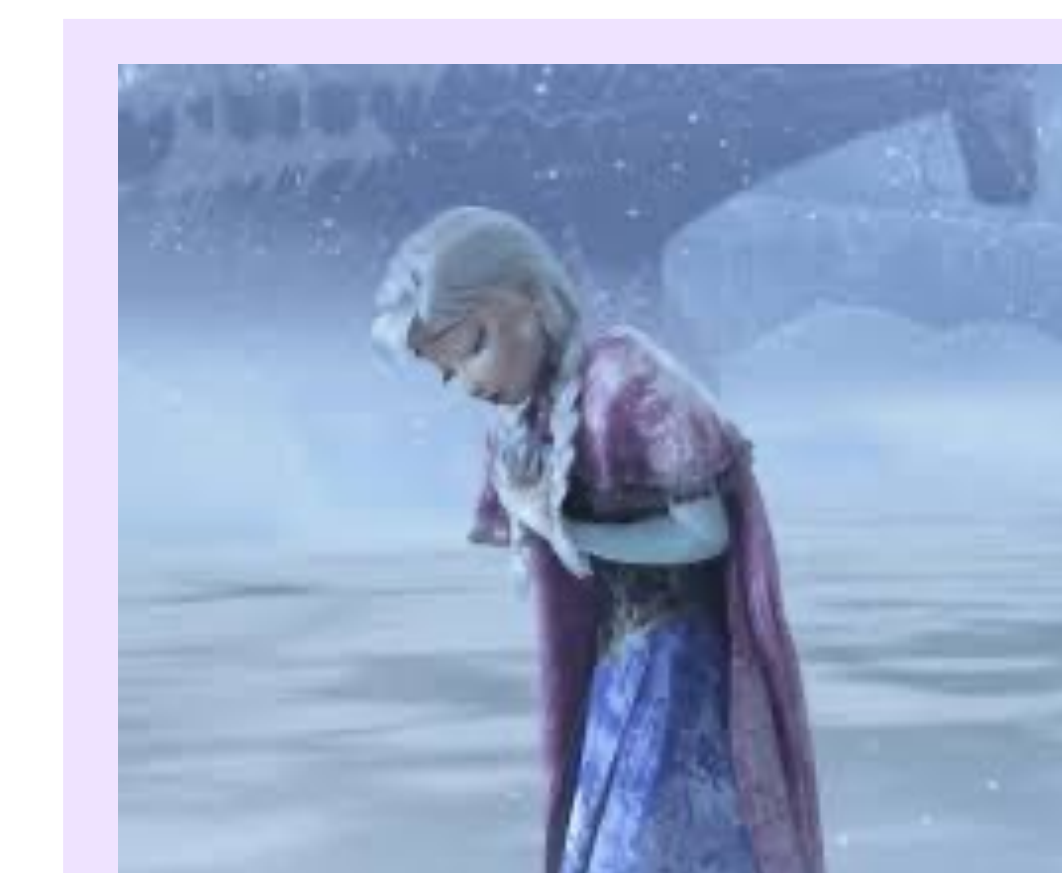
- **Content analysis**
 - Behavior codebook (England et al., 2011), with two categories of masculine and feminine behaviors
 - 16 sub-categories of masculine behaviors
 - 18 sub-categories of feminine behaviors
- Physical appearance codebook (González et al., 2020)



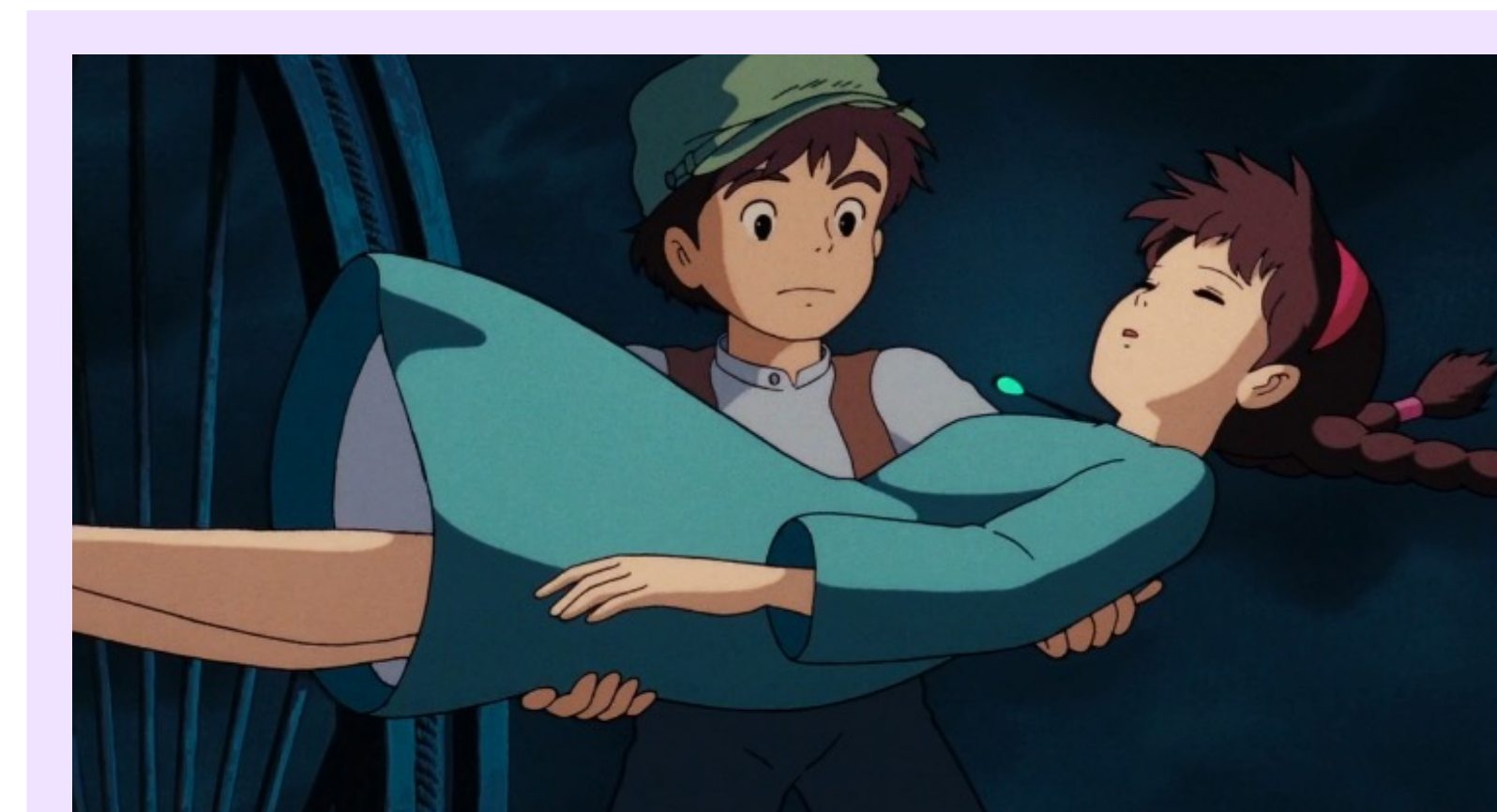
Feminine Behavior



Masculine Behavior



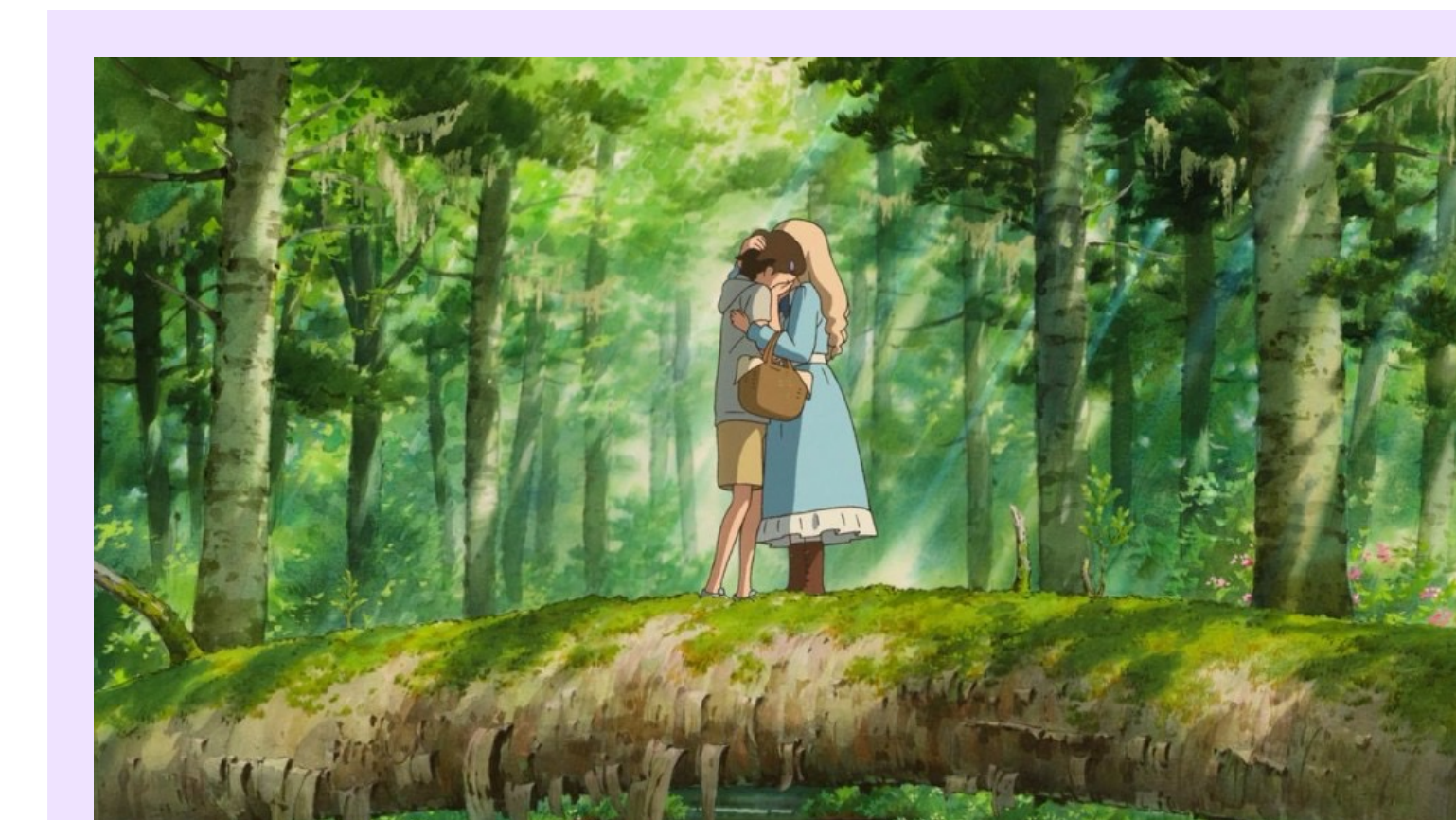
Feminine Behavior



Feminine Behavior



Masculine Behavior



Feminine Behavior

Theory

- **Gender Performativity theory** (Judith Butler, 1999)
 - Gender is not innate; instead, it's performed
 - Gender is a set of actions that society has deemed as either masculine or feminine
 - Gender portrayed through repeated actions
- **Radical feminism**
 - Radical-libertarian: women encouraged to be androgynous, gender is separate from sex
 - Radical-cultural: women should not be androgynous, women are not similar to men
- **Third-wave feminism**
 - Understanding human and gender oppression
 - Diversify problems and thinking to other groups

Conclusions

- Cyclical pattern in how they portray female protagonists across various films
 - 1930's-1980's, female protagonists depicted with more feminine behaviors
 - 1990's, female protagonists depicted with more masculine behaviors
 - 2010's, female protagonists depicted with more feminine behaviors
- All villains regardless of gender, are depicted as more masculine
- Walt Disney's male characters had more diversity in their depiction, whereas Studio Ghibli did not
- Similar gender roles/norms across the U.S. and Japan