



universität
wien

MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

**“Sly Fox - Dumb Bunny: An Analysis of
Anthropomorphism, Gender Roles and Cultural
Connotation in Disney's *Zootopia*”**

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education (MEd)

Wien, 2022 / Vienna 2022

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

UA 199 507 509 02

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium Lehramt Sek (AB) Lehrverbund
Unterrichtsfach Englisch Lehrverbund
Unterrichtsfach Französisch Lehrverbund

Betreut von / Supervisor:

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Date: 20th November 2022

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Acknowledgements

In this section, I would like to thank all people who contributed to the successful termination of my studies. First and foremost, I want to thank Univ. Prof. Dr Monika Seidl who has supported and guided me throughout the process of research, writing and revising my Master's as well as my Bachelor's thesis. I would like to thank Univ. Prof. Dr Monika Seidl for her outstanding supervision, feedback and patience, and for always taking time to address any questions I had before, during and after writing my thesis.

Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to my family and all of my friends, who have supported me in any way possible throughout the duration of my studies. I want to add a particular thank you to my parents, who enabled me to move to Vienna in order to study at this remarkable university and who were always there when I needed them. Further, I want to say thank you to my brother for sharing his Disney+ account with me, which was crucial to conduct the analysis in my thesis.

Lastly, I want to thank all my university colleagues, who have made my time at the University of Vienna unforgettable. I also want to thank all the professors who have shared their knowledge with me throughout my studies and who helped me develop academically, but also personally.

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1. Introduction

Walt Disney films are famous for their ability to bring animals to life. While older movies predominantly depicted cartoon animals as protagonists, more recent productions feature animated animals as their main characters. One renowned example of the latter category is the movie *Zootopia*, which is also known as *Zoomania*, or *Zootropolis* depending on the broadcasting country. For the respective thesis, the film will henceforth be referred to as *Zootopia*, while the city itself will be called either *Zootopia* or *Zootropolis*. This Walt Disney Studios Motion Picture production aired in 2016 and received an Oscar for the best animation movie the following year (Andris & Ruescas 141). Anthropomorphism is a recurring theme in Disney films, as well as in children's entertainment in general, since animals are frequently dressed, able to speak or otherwise embody human characteristics.

This thesis is dedicated to the analysis and discussion of the aforementioned film, focussing on anthropomorphism and gender roles as a main point of research. Moreover, the portrayal of intersectional prejudices, such as gender stereotypes, ethnicity or class issues will be discussed in relation to anthropomorphism. The thesis further addresses the respective representation and connotation of individual animals in different cultures, as the Disney animation film is shown globally and some of the animated animals vary according to the broadcasting location (Andris & Ruescas 142). In order to thoroughly analyse Disney's *Zootopia*, background information on the film as well as theoretical frameworks on anthropomorphism and gender will be discussed in detail. Furthermore, the following research questions will be addressed: To what end is anthropomorphism used in this film? Based on this central question, several sub-questions will be discussed: Which gender stereotypes are portrayed? Which animals embody which role?

To further specify the last question, two more questions will be taken into account: How are these roles related to typical connotations of animals in Western cultures? What are the connotations in other cultural spaces where this film is shown?

In order to answer these questions, some key concepts and theories from the research field of animal studies are utilised. Anthropomorphism and its use in the respective Disney film is the core topic of this paper. According to Epley et al. in the most basic sense anthropomorphism can be defined as attributing human-like characteristics to nonhuman agents (Epley et al. 144). Furthermore, relevant concepts from gender and feminist studies as well as film studies are employed and used as a theoretical framework. Discussing stereotypical gender roles is a crucial part of the methodology of this thesis, as following Thompson & Zerbinos in the

majority of mainstream films gender roles follow a traditional stereotype, i.e. men lead and women follow (Thompson & Zerbinos 668). Finally, the concept of othering and the representation of minorities in the film represent another part of this thesis. Based on research done by Alia & Bull, a basic distinction referring to the representation of minorities in mainstream media can be observed, as minorities are mostly either romanticised or criminalised (Alia and Bull 3). This portrayal of minorities thus creates a sensation of othering, as these groups are explicitly referred to as different from the rest, i.e. the majority (Alia & Bull 6). In terms of filmic concepts, a key focus of this paper is filmic composition and design in the field of *mise en scène*. The importance of several filmic concepts, following the definition of Giannetti, such as framing, as well as their individual meanings, will be used as an analytical tool in reference to Disney's *Zootopia* (Giannetti 47).

2. Contexts and Theoretical Frameworks

The following chapter addresses the most important theories and concepts needed to ensure an in-depth understanding of the subsequent analysis of Zootopia. The background of the Walt Disney Company, as well as the concept of a family film, will be discussed in detail. Moreover, the link between language and gender will be examined, as the portrayal of gender roles in the film Zootopia is a key topic of this thesis. Finally, the term anthropomorphism will be defined and terms that are associated with anthropomorphism are also considered in more detail.

2.1. The Walt Disney Company

The Walt Disney Company is one of the most successful companies in the entertainment industry and is known globally by people of every age. Following the information on the Walt Disney Company website, the firm was founded in 1923 as a small cartoon studio by Walter and Roy Disney. One year after its foundation the first short film was released. The strip was part of Walt Disney's early works, the *Alice Comedies* and had the name *Alice's Day at the Sea*. Two years later, in 1926, the company that has initially been founded as "The Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio" changed its name to the world-famous "Walt Disney Studio". According to the information found in the 'about' section of the company's homepage, in 1928 the iconic Disney character Mickey Mouse appeared for the first time. In 1929 the company was divided into several smaller enterprises, namely a production company with the name the Walt Disney Enterprises, an investment company and a recording company. In 1932 Walt Disney wins his first Academy Award after creating the first full-colour cartoon *Flowers and Trees*. Another memorable year for the company and its founders was 1927. According to their website, this year marked the release of their first animated feature film in full length, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. After Walt Disney died in 1966, the company is led by his brother Roy until his own death in 1971. Despite some initial hardships, the Disney brothers slowly climbed the ladder to success and made the Walt Disney Company and its subsidiaries world-renowned (Walt Disney Archives: Disney History).

As regards the firm's mission the Walt Disney Company website states that they aspire to: "entertain, inform and inspire people around the globe through the power of unparalleled storytelling" (The Walt Disney Company: about). Furthermore, it is repeatedly emphasised on the webpage that Disney addresses family in their totality. The company aspires to provide family entertainment that is diverse and international. Regarding the company's purpose, it is

stated that they aim to be: “Inspiring a better world through the power of stories” (The Walt Disney Company: about).

Disney also seeks to be an outstanding business for its employees. According to information on the company’s website, the corporate social responsibility report shows that one of its main objectives is to ensure a diverse, equal and inclusive work atmosphere. They declare that 43% of people in executive or managing positions are female and 42% of directors are women (The Walt Disney Company: Diversity Dashboard). In more general terms, approximately 50% of the people working for the Walt Disney Company declare themselves female, while 46% of the total number of employees are people of colour (The Walt Disney Company: impact).

The company website also provides detailed information on which countries the enterprise operates or is present in. In terms of business operations, Disney can be classified as a global player as they have teams in the Asia Pacific, EMEA, as well as in Latin America to ensure that not only each region is able to view the newest Disney films but to also create content that specifically serves the needs of a particular area (The Walt Disney Company: about). Ranked according to box-office turnover, about half of the thirty most successful films of all times have been produced by the Walt Disney Company and its subsidiaries. Their global presence is also reflected in their yearly turnover and profit rates. Following statistics published on the statista.com website, in 2021 the Walt Disney Company achieved a turnover of 67,42 Billion US\$ with a profit of 2 Billion US\$. In the year the movie Zootopia aired, Disney had a turnover of approximately 55 Billion US\$ (Weidenbach).

2.2. Family Film

Having addressed Walt Disney as a company, we will now turn to one of their main products, namely the family film. In her book “Television and Women’s Culture: The Politics of the Popular” (1990) Brown explains that the family film dates back to the 1920s with its roots in the association of Hollywood with a family institution. During this era, production companies attempted to create a cinematic experience appealing to the general public, incorporating people of all ages. According to Brown the choice to label a cinematic production as made for families has been strategically made as an audience which included all members of a family was perceived as profitable, respectable and most importantly appropriate for mass culture (Brown 18). However, following Brown’s insights, it is important to note the difference between the family cinema, coined by Hollywood in the 1920s and the family film of today. The cinematic

experience of the 1920s typically included several shorter clips, musical performances and a film in order to appeal to every spectator and cover a broad variety of genres. Thus, each part of a cinematic experience was tailored to suit the taste of a specific audience, e.g. short comics for children and a feature film for adults. The family film on the other hand aspires to offer a film that an entire family would enjoy watching together. The core purpose of a family film, as stated above, can be thus taken as its definition, as a more specific classification proved difficult to find. The main reason for the lack of universal definition of the family film is the broad variety of genres a family film typically includes, such as cartoons, fairy tales or fantasy. Thus, a family film is not defined by a genre per se but rather by its target audience (Brown 10). Brown also highlights that:

Almost all family films attempt to elicit pleasurable emotional responses in audiences, especially feelings of comfort, reassurance and even happiness. The means through which these emotional cues are transmitted vary from film to film, but Hollywood family-orientated productions almost invariably convey certain ideological values (e.g. the reaffirmation of 'family' and other forms of kinship) attractively packaged in a narrative that fulfils certain structural expectations (e.g. a happy ending). (Brown, 2012, 10)

A family film can further be classified according to its rating. Brown summarises that from the 1960s on, an independent committee ranks films that are exhibited in the United States based on how appropriate they are for young adults. The rating 'G – suitable for all ages' is commonly ascribed to family films, as no content within the film is perceived as inappropriate for children or young adolescents. Although there are different ranking scales in different countries, similar mechanisms are applied to determine whether a film is suitable for children or not. Moreover, family films usually are targeted to please all ages, contain little to no violent or sexual content, do not include any swear words or other forms of bad language, aspire to attract a variety of audiences with their content, obtain a family-appropriate rating, and offer some kind of merchandise (Brown 13).

Within the film industry, the family film is one of the most popular categories to be produced. Following Brown, one of the main reasons for its popularity is its likelihood of success by promising a high number of spectators and a profitable box-office turnover. Family films tend to be generally successful as they speak to the widest spectrum of people possible. By labelling a film as family-friendly, producers aim to overcome hurdles such as age, ethnicity, gender or social class. Moreover, modern family films are produced to be globally successful. Consequently, according to Brown, major production studios, such as the Walt Disney

Company, present their movies to a significant number of people before releasing them to ensure that they will be popular within as many countries, ethnicities, social groups and people of different ages as possible (Brown 11).

2.3. Language and Gender

This chapter addresses the link between linguistic behaviour and gender, focussing on the theory of female speech that has been coined by Robin Lakoff. Language and the way people speak is an important part of their identity. Researchers, such as Janet Holmes (1997, 195) state that “[l]inguistic behaviour expresses complex social meanings. Through language we assert or cede control, we indicate the different social groups with which we identify, the social roles we embrace, and the sometimes conflicting values we espouse”. Language is thus a powerful tool, which also bears high potential in an analytical context, as differences as well as similarities between genders, social groups or cultures may be identified through someone’s linguistic behaviour (ibid. 195).

A concept that is frequently associated with the relationship between language and gender is agency. One possible definition provided by Dumitru in his book “Feminism, Agency and Objectivity” in 2018 of this concept is the ability and freedom to pursue individual aims or strive to achieve specific values. Agency thus includes a sense of responsibility as individuals have to achieve their goals and objectives themselves (Dumitru 94). Furthermore, following the information in Ahearn’s book “Language and Agency” published in 2001, the term is often used in relation to exercising one’s free will, particularly in terms of choosing one’s way of speaking. Language is a powerful tool to express one’s identity and show belonging to a particular social group. Thus, through one’s choice of linguistic tools, people can exercise their personal agency (Ahearn 125).

Numerous researchers, like Svendsen (2019), Holmes (1984), Cameron et al. (1988), Fishman (1978) and Carli (1990), have focussed on the role of language and gender. Another influential researcher in this area is Robin Lakoff, who recognised several linguistic items that may reflect on the difference between men and women and their way of expressing themselves. According to Lakoff’s theory, women are defined both by how they speak and are spoken about. People form judgements about others based on their linguistic choices and speaking behaviour, which may have no relation to the real character of a person. Lakoff states that, generally, women avoid strong expressions and opt for words that suggest a certain level of uncertainty. The tools

to analyse women's speech are lexicon, i.e. which adjectives, colour terms and particles women use in their speech, as well as the syntax, i.e. their use of tag questions, and aspects of intonation, especially regarding requests or orders (Lakoff 45). Based on Lakoff's research, women tend to use more detailed expressions to describe items that deal with colour. Moreover, according to this theory men and women differ significantly in their use of swear words and 'bad' language. In general, it can be said that men tend to swear more often and are less restricted in their use of meaningless particles while it is often disapproved when women do the same. Consequently, women frequently exchange swear words with more neutral terms such as "oh dear" or "oh my" as they are seen as more appropriate. Additionally to the use of swear words and their connotation per se, the use of meaningless particles also shows how strongly one is expressing their emotions (Lakoff 50).

According to Lakoff's research women frequently use a wider range of descriptive adjectives, e.g. adorable, charming, divine, or lovely, while men usually use a more 'neutral' range of adjectives such as good, cool, great, or terrific. Another aspect that is particular about Lakoff's definition of female speech is the use of tag questions. Those questions are in between a direct statement and a classic yes or no question. According to the author's explanation, it is "less assertive than the former but more confident than the latter" (Lakoff 54). Consequently, based on Lakoff's theory, a tag question is used by a speaker who thinks their utterance is true but lacks complete certainty that this is the case. An example of this type of question would be the following:

'Is the baby hungry?' – a normal yes or no question where either of the answers is equally probable and the speaker does not expect a specific answer. Whereas the tag question 'The baby is hungry, isn't it?' shows that the speaker is anticipating some kind of confirmation to their utterance while leaving room for the addressee to disagree without being face-threatening to the speaker (Lakoff 54). According to Lakoff, the reason why tag questions are frequently associated with female speech is their vagueness. These types of phrases enable the speaker to make a statement without fully committing him- or herself and thus avoiding a potential conflict with the person spoken to. The main problem with tag questions is, however, that they pose a risk to make the speaker seem uncertain of themselves, seeking the addressee's approval or having no opinion of their own (ibid. 55). The tag used in a tag question is crucial for its meaning and its implied purpose. While some tag questions, as the example above illustrates, are used to receive confirmation from the addressee and can thus be seen as a supportive or facilitative tag, other tags might be used in a more challenging way. Based on research done by

Holmes, women frequently make use of the first two categories of tags, while men often opt for the latter (Holmes 202).

According to Lakoff's research, an additional item of speech that is frequently used by female speakers is the particle. Particles are commonly used by women to formulate a request in order to avoid sounding too direct or commanding. The use of particles in a request makes the latter seem more polite and less demanding (Lakoff 56). Following Lakoff and Holmes, it can be affirmed that language is associated not only with gender, identity and culture but also with power. Holmes explains that while people who frequently exert their right to speak, take up a lot of speaking time in a conversation or approach the addressee more directly are commonly in a position of power, people who seem more hesitant and indirect in their way of speaking are often associated with a lack of power. Holmes states that as positions of power are frequently retained by men, linguistic behaviour that expresses power is thus often coined masculine (Holmes 203). Lakoff summarises that women, who are often excluded from power, are thus associated with linguistic items that express less power and are consequently considered more polite (Lakoff 56). Finally, the theory of female speech states that not only the way women speak but also the way that women are spoken about shows a certain level of gender asymmetry, as men are often spoken about in a more serious way, while conversations about women regularly indicate that they are not taken seriously (ibid. 57).

Scholars such as Eagly (1987) support Lakoff's claim that men and women are spoken about differently by analysing which attributes are commonly associated with each gender. Eagly argues that men are perceived to possess more agency than women and thus characteristics that are summarised as agentic are frequently allocated to men. Agentic behaviour is described by Eagly as controlling and assertive and it is stereotypically supposed to be located with the male gender (Eagly 16). Examples of agentic adjectives would be dominant, self-confident, independent or aggressive (Eagly 16). According to Eagly, women are perceived as more community-oriented and caring and consequently, so-called communal attributes such as selflessness, kindness or gentleness are usually associated with women (Eagly 16).

Research done by Thornham further supports the outcomes of Lakoff's research, by investigating how men and women are represented in public and media (Thornham 69). According to Thornham, women are frequently portrayed as dependent on men and subordinate. In order to gain independence and power, Thornham argues that women have to

lose stereotypically female characteristics, such as kindness, and adopt traits that contradict the stereotypical perception of women, such as agency (Thornham 69).

Having discussed the basic notion of Lakoff's thesis, we will now address some of the criticism regarding her approach. One aspect that has been criticised in regard to Lakoff's theory is the label she used, namely women's language. Consequently, in a linguistic context, as well as within the field of gender studies, the phenomenon described by Lakoff is now referred to as tentative language as opposed to assertive language (Svendsen 1).

As Svendsen addresses in her research, Lakoff's hypotheses are based on her own experiences with the way of speaking she observed among her female acquaintances. Consequently, scholars such as Svendsen (2019) or Holmes (1984) argue that a wider spectrum of examples is necessary in order to make representative statements about the link between language and gender.

In a study executed by Holmes she analysed a linguistic corpus of 43.000 words. This led Holmes to the conclusion that tags first and foremost either carry modal or affective meanings. The former tag is used in a speaker-oriented way, as it addresses a person's level of certainty regarding a specific suggestion, for instance, approval or agreement (Holmes 61). Tags that carry affective meaning are focused on the addressee and can be described in more detail as either facilitative or softening. Facilitative tags work as showing solidarity with the addressee and are supposed to help the addressee interact with the speaker (Holmes 71). Softening tags on the other hand are used as a tool of politeness and respect regarding the addressee's emotions, hence this tag is frequently used in a critical context. Holmes concludes from her research that although the general approach of Lakoff was good, it lacks complexity (Svendsen 3). Consequently, Holmes pleads that Lakoff's theory about tags and showing a lack of certainty is not sufficiently supported by research. Holmes' research supports Lakoff's statement that women generally use more tags than men, however, not significantly more, 56.6% of tag questions in the analysed sample were used by women vs. 43.4% were used by men. However, there is a clear difference in the functional use of tags. While men are using modal tags more frequently, women are more likely to use facilitative tags than men (Holmes 73). Holmes, as well as Svendsen also criticise that Lakoff's examples used to support her claims lack context (Svendsen 3).

In another study conducted by Holmes, the English Dialect Survey, she states that while there is a difference in the way men and women speak, other aspects, such as the identification with a gender or a social group are often more relevant for the choice of certain linguistic items than the biological sex as such (Holmes 217).

Other scholars, such as Fishman, agree to some extent with Lakoff in saying that some conversational structures show gender inequality (Svendsen 5). However, contrary to Lakoff, in her article “Interaction: The Work Women Do”, Fishman states that the linguistic behaviour she observed is not directly related to any female insecurity, but rather reflects social imbalances between men and women (Fishman 405). In short, Fishman argues that tentative speech is more frequently used by women and has certain benefits, such as maintaining a conversation for instance, but it also mirrors the gender asymmetry that prevails in society. As she frames it: “The people who do the routine maintenance work, the women, are not the same people who control or benefit from the process.” (Fishman, 1978, 405). As Svendsen points out, Fishman’s sample, consisting of 3 heterosexual couples is not representative on its own (Svendsen 5). However, Fishman’s claims are supported by research from the scholars Holmes (1984) and Carli (1990), who further investigated the phenomenon of tentative language (Svendsen 5).

In her research on the relationship between gender and language, Carli shows that women are more likely to use tentative speech in a conversation with men than in exclusively female interactions. She noted that in general women use more tentative items throughout the course of a conversation than men (Carli 946). Following Svendsen’s summary of Carli’s studies, her hypotheses are built on research assuming that men generally have a better social status than women (Svendsen 5). Consequently, Carli’s investigation supports Lakoff’s claim that women tend to speak more tentatively than men, especially as regards the frequency of using tag questions, hedges and disclaimers. However, Carli’s interpretation of the study’s results is not consistent with Lakoff’s theory, as Carli does not identify a direct link between tentative speech and women’s lack of confidence (Svendsen 6). Carli also acknowledges that tentative speech carries certain interactional benefits, as her study’s results suggest that women use tentative speech in order to be heard by men, while still meeting the stereotypical criteria of gendered interaction (Carli 947). Carli also recognises the problematic aspects of tentative speech, as she points out that by using tags, hedges and disclaimers in a mixed-gender conversation, women are likely to be perceived as less competent due to their linguistic choices (Carli 947).

Carli conducted another study to further investigate the perception of tentative language among men and women. While women were perceived as more trustworthy by men when speaking tentatively, they were also seen as less confident and less competent than when speaking assertively. In conclusion, based on Svendsen's summary of Carli's research, it can be argued that tentative speech is neither exclusively positive nor negative and the link between language and gender is more complicated than initially assumed by Lakoff (Svendsen 6).

Another group of scholars, namely Cameron, McAlinden & O'Leary researched the link between tentative language and power by investigating tag questions and criticising the prior research conducted by Lakoff. According to Cameron, McAlinden & O'Leary, it is highly problematic to assume that all tags used in a conversation have the same, stable function (Cameron, McAlinden & O'Leary 77). Furthermore, the scholars criticise the direct link Lakoff creates between women, language use and a subordinate position in society. Cameron, McAlinden & O'Leary argue that although some aspects of tentative language promote the idea of powerlessness, it is not justified to say that only women and all women use this type of speech (Cameron, McAlinden & O'Leary 78). Svendsen also supports this claim, as she states that it is not sufficient to merely differentiate between male and female, but that other factors have to be taken into account. According to Svendsen, as well as Cameron, McAlinden & O'Leary, aspects such as ethnical background, age, educational background, status within society, belonging to a certain social group and sexual orientation all contribute to a person's linguistic choices (Svendsen 8).

In short, as adequately summarised by Svendsen, the research that has been done on language and gender shows contradicting results. Studies such as the one conducted by Lakoff (1973) describe features of tentative language, such as tag questions as indicating a lack of power, while other studies, e.g. Carli (1990), show that tag questions can also contribute to maintaining the conversational lead, and thus may be used to a person's advantage. However, it can be concluded that the link between language and gender is complex and tentative language bears the potential to make a speaker appear less confident and competent (Svendsen 9). As this chapter has shown, it can be confirmed that there is some difference in the linguistic behaviour of men and women.

To facilitate understanding and streamline the insights gained by discussing the studies of the aforementioned scholars, the categories of hedging and boosting will be used in the subsequent analysis. As stated by Murphy, hedging can be understood as a collective term for different forms of tentative language (Murphy 47). Hedges were originally defined by Lakoff as approximators, in order to weaken or strengthen an utterance in a conversation. However, scholars such as Murphy further specify hedges and proposed several forms of them (Murphy 47). The following list of hedges has been adapted by Murphy (47) and is based on the research by Carter and McCarthy (2006):

Form	Example
Verbs:	
– Modals: <i>may, might, can, could, would</i> etc.	This <i>may</i> be the answer to it
– Formulaic expressions: <i>I mean, I think, I suppose, you know, you see</i> etc.	Then again I <i>think</i> we sort of went into a lull
Nouns: <i>thing, possibility</i>	Can you pass that <i>thing</i> over there on the bed?
Adverbs:	
– Degree adverbs: <i>Quite, relatively, necessarily</i> etc.	There's not <i>necessarily</i> only one way of doing these things
– Restrictive adverbs: <i>Just; only</i> etc.	Could I <i>just</i> ask you something?
– Stance adverbs: <i>Of course, actually, kind of, sort of, really, maybe, shur, yeara</i> etc.	He's <i>kind of</i> interested in starting a new course
Syntactic choices:	
– Choice of question form	<i>And would you have thought</i> you were very close to him? [as opposed to: And <i>were you</i> very close to him?]
– Double negative	It's not that I'm not afraid Vs I am afraid.
– Evaluative relative clause insertion	You got them to do this cross-group reporting <i>which was a good idea</i> <u>but</u> the time was the problem.
Tags	
– Question tags	She's a teacher, <i>isn't she?</i>
– Directive tags	Shut the door, <i>will you</i>
Features of 'onlineness' adjustments:	<i>And will you would you</i> like to go <i>sort of</i> on a sun and sea holiday with him this year?
– Repetitions, false starts	

Image 1: Forms of Hedges

For the scope of this thesis, not all forms of hedging will be used for the speech analysis, but the investigation will focus on tags, modal verbs, formulaic expressions, repetitions or false starts, and restrictive adverbs.

To contrast tentative language and hedges, boosters as a category of assertive language will be addressed in the analysis. According to Murphy, boosters can be seen as the opposite of hedges as they are commonly used to strengthen an utterance and make the speaker sound more confident, and they are further used to make statements more direct and assertive (Murphy 135). Following Murphy's research, in order to achieve this goal, the use of *must* to make an interlocuter pay attention and to stress that the speaker's utterance is important and noteworthy is a common booster in conversations (Murphy 135). Further, Murphy (2010, 135-136) listed the following expression to be frequently used as boosters: "categorically, certainly, clearly, definitely, emphatically, indisputably, inevitably, irrefutably, observably, obviously, plainly, undeniably, undoubtedly, unquestionably [...] for sure/for certain, it is/was clear/obvious/indisputable etc. that, there is/was no doubt that, without doubt, of course". Furthermore, as stated by Murphy, negative expressions directed towards the addressee, such as *don't you think you should better*, are typical boosters in an interaction (Murphy 136).

Consequently, for the analytical part of this thesis, some improved aspects of Lakoff's model of female speech will be used to investigate the representation of gender in a linguistic sense in order to detect whether gender stereotypes are continued or broken with. To adopt the aforementioned critique, the terms tentative and assertive language will be used instead of the labels proposed by Lakoff. Furthermore, the criticism of Lakoff's work will be taken into account and some adaptations suggested by the scholars mentioned above will be applied in order to gain a more adequate outcome. As one main focus of the analysis is the stereotypical representation of gender in the film, instances of tentative and assertive language will be categorised into hedges and boosters, as categorised in detail above. Furthermore, other factors, such as social status or species will be taken into account.

2.4. Mise en Scène

The following sub-chapter addresses the methodological tool *mise en scène*, as it will be used in the analytical part of this thesis. In a cinematic context, the composition of visual elements bears significant symbolic meaning. As stated by Gibbs in his book "Mise-en-scène", the term *mise en scène* originates from theatre and refers to any object that appears on a stage (Gibbs 12). Within a filmic context, the definition of the phrase is more complex and the approach used in this paper follows western-centred conventions. Corresponding to Giannetti's research in his book "understanding movies", *mise en scène* includes the arrangement of visual elements in a three-dimensional space, while converting the final result into the two-dimensional space of an

image within a frame. Consequently, how the elements of a filmic composition are arranged within the frame is significant for the analysis of any film (Giannetti 47). It is vital to bear in mind that the film *Zootopia*, which is the focus of analysis, is fully computer animated. It can be consequently assumed that elements of *mise en scène* discussed in this chapter are purposefully used to convey certain ideas of power, personal relations and identity.

As the definition of the term *mise en scène* in a filmic context already suggests, numerous elements contribute to the final composition. According to Giannetti, the first part of the visual arrangement is framing, a tool that creates the borders of the world that is shown on screen. While objects shown on screen can be portrayed in various ways, it is crucial to state that framing is never arbitrary. As Giannetti argues, each part of the frame carries symbolic meaning, as for example the centre of the frame automatically attracts the viewer's attention and is thus used for the most prominent subjects or objects in a particular shot (Giannetti 54). It is important to stress once again that the methodological tool of *mise en scène* described in this thesis is based on a western context and might vary within other research areas. Giannetti explains that the top of the frame is frequently used to convey ideas of dominance or power. Visual elements that are placed on top of the frame appear authoritative, or superior to other elements that are shown further below. Consequently, this part of the frame is often used to portray villains or antagonists of a film, as they appear hostile or treacherous if the other objects that are on the screen are of similar size (*ibid.* 55). In contrast to the upper part of the frame, the bottom suggests that visual elements shown here lack power or authority and thus appear weak or vulnerable. This technique is used to make visual elements at the bottom appear to be in danger, or even to disappear from the screen completely. Finally, also the left and right edges of a frame bear symbolic meaning. As Giannetti (2014, 55) describes:

The left and right edges of the frame tend to suggest insignificance because these are the areas farthest removed from the centre of the screen. Objects and figures placed near the edges are literally close to the darkness outside the frame. Many directors use this darkness to suggest those symbolic ideas traditionally associated with the lack of light—the unknown, the unseen, and the fearful. In some instances, the blackness outside the frame can symbolize oblivion or even death.

The absence of visual elements within the frame is furthermore frequently exploited to show evoke curiosity among spectators. This technique creates a sense of incompleteness which is often filled with the ideas and imagination of the viewers themselves (Giannetti 59).

Having discussed the symbolic power that positioning within the frame has on the storyline of a movie, we will now turn to the composition within the frame as a whole. According to Giannetti, while it is usually attempted to create a balanced composition on the frame, sometimes the filmmakers deliberately break this balance (ibid. 61). The first concept that will be discussed in more detail is the dominant contrast. As the name already suggests, this part of the composition immediately catches the viewer's eye by contrasting the rest of the visual elements. Another important term is the intrinsic interest of a composition. Following Giannetti's definition, this element gains importance through context, as viewers conclude that the item of intrinsic interest is more important for a story than it seems to be. How an image is composed also carries symbolic meaning. If something is placed in the middle of a frame, the objects or characters placed in front or behind that main focus comment on the midground of the composition (Giannetti 54).

Lastly, following research done by Gibbs in his book "*Mise-en-scène*", the importance of space and camera positioning will be discussed, as both are significantly contributing to the symbolic value that *mise en scène* can create (Gibbs 36). Similar to reality, powerful characters usually occupy a larger amount of space in the frame than subordinate figures or items. Furthermore, according to Giannetti, the amount of space a character is given suggests how important they are for the story (Giannetti 71). As explained by Gibbs, the personal space that filmic characters are given also carries symbolic meaning, as it can be invaded or otherwise compromised. Personal space also indicates the relation between certain characters in their proximity or distance from one another (Gibbs 24). Giannetti convincingly argued that the portrayal of space is purposefully used by filmmakers as it can "define, adjust and redefine human relationships by exploiting spatial conventions" (Giannetti, 2014, 71).

The way a character faces the camera or refuses to do so carries as much symbolic meaning as the distribution of space. In general, following Giannetti's description, there are five main camera positions, namely the full front, the quarter turn, the profile, the three-quarter turn and the back to camera position. The full front shot creates a feeling of intimacy and proximity, as the viewer feels included and is likely to identify with a character when he or she is facing the camera. The quarter turn is highly popular amongst producers as it offers intimacy while being less emotionally connecting than the full front. A character that shows their profile to the camera appears to be unaware of its presence and thus creates a feeling of distance (Giannetti 77). The three-quarter turn creates even more distance between spectator and character as the person on

the screen appears to be almost anonymous. According to Giannetti, this shot is used to evoke a feeling of antipathy, as the viewer is deprived of seeing the majority of the character's face and is thus not likely to identify with them (Giannetti 77). Finally, a character might also turn their back to the camera and thus hinders the viewer to see their face. This shot is used to suggest that a character is disconnected or alienated and to provoke a feeling of mystery (Giannetti 77).

Having discussed the numerous ways in which the use of space within the frame is used to convey symbolic meaning, it is also worth mentioning that the open space within a shot contributes to the composition. In his analysis, Giannetti (2014, 77) suggests that:

[t]he amount of open space within the territory of the frame can be exploited for symbolic purposes. Generally speaking, the closer the shot, the more confined the photographed figures appear to be. Such shots are usually referred to as tightly framed. Conversely, longer, loosely framed shots tend to suggest freedom. Prison films often use tightly framed close-ups and medium shots because the frame functions as a kind of symbolic prison.

In short, each part of a filmic composition is crucial to convey certain ideas of power, personal relationships and the importance of specific characters, which is why *mise en scène* is a useful tool for filmic analysis.

2.5. Anthropomorphism

The following chapter addresses the concept of anthropomorphism, its definition according to animal studies, as well as other possible definitions suitable for the scope of the respective thesis. Furthermore, the concept of anthropomorphism will be discussed in relation to its role in the media, more precisely in children's films. Lastly, the term Disneyfication and its relation to anthropomorphism will be examined.

Anthropomorphism is a common concept in the academic field of animal studies and will be addressed following the research conducted by Eddy, Gallup & Povinelli, as well as Tahiroglu & Taylor, Akshaya & Chellerian, Parkinson, Epley, Waytz & Cacioppo, Geerds, Daston & Mitman, Boddice, Burke & Copenhaver, Karlsson and Lorraine & Mitman.

Literally, the term anthropomorphism is derived from two Greek words, namely *anthrōpos* which means human and *morphē* which means form. According to the authors Eddy, Gallup & Povinelli, initially, the term anthropomorphism referred to attributing human-like characteristics or bodies to gods and other spiritual figures. However, since the beginning of

the twentieth century, anthropomorphism refers to animals and the attribution of human characteristics to non-human subjects. This definition is commonly used within the field of animal studies and emphasises the similarities between humans and animals, regarding their needs, emotions and capabilities (Eddy, Gallup, and Povinelli 88). Another approach to defining anthropomorphism follows Tahiroglu & Taylor's approach and addresses the attribution of cognitive, human-like mental states to non-human agents, which is more susceptible to individual differences regarding the anthropomorphised animals (Tahiroglu & Taylor 284). Additionally, according to Akshaya & Chellerian, anthropomorphism also relates to human-like appearance in animals (Akshaya & Chellerian 8875). Anthropomorphism, however, is not merely restricted to animals. Parkinson argues convincingly that the concept might also refer to the attribution of human-like characteristics to a spiritual figure, such as god, or any other kind of object, whether animate or not (Parkinson 1).

The concept of anthropomorphism reaches further than merely attributing human-like characteristics to non-human figures. According to Epley et al., within the field of animal studies, as well as within human-animal studies, the concept also entails the attribution of human-like emotional states, behavioural aspects and physical forms to non-human agents (Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo 865). Anthropomorphism can thus be described as “[...] a process of inference about unobservable characteristics of a nonhuman agent, rather than descriptive reports of a nonhuman agent's observable or imagined behavior” (Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007, 865). Consequently, following Geerdts' research, it can be said that anthropomorphism might encourage a human-centred perspective on the animal or biological world and might also promote the attribution of human-specific characteristics to real animals (Geerdts 10). The aforementioned view on anthropomorphism is frequently criticised. As argued by Daston & Mitman, it is perceived to be a form of self-centred narcissism to interpret one's surroundings as a reflection of oneself (Daston & Mitman 4).

A concept which is closely related to anthropomorphism, especially to its human-centredness, and common in the field of human-animal studies is anthropocentrism. In brief, following Boddice, anthropocentrism can be defined as a bias in favour of humans (Boddice 223). This term describes the phenomenon of humans interpreting everything, even non-human agents, from a human point of view. Moreover, according to Karlsson, this term also refers to a theoretical position, which emphasises that humans are the only species who are eligible for a moral standing (Karlsson 708-709). It is furthermore crucial to mention, as highlighted by

Tahiroglu & Taylor, that people do not anthropomorphise every non-human agent to the same extent. Differences between animal species regarding the degree to which they are anthropomorphised as well as which characteristics are commonly attributed to them are noticeable (Tahiroglu & Taylor 284). Several other factors also influence the degree to which humans anthropomorphise certain animals and attribute them to cognitive traits. According to Eddy, Gallup & Povinelli, the animal species, for instance, is one main factor for the level of anthropomorphism, as animals which appear more human-like are generally anthropomorphised to a higher extent than species which appear largely different to humans. Moreover, the more similarities people perceive between themselves and a respective animal, the more likely they are to anthropomorphise (Eddy, Gallup, & Povinelli 95).

Having discussed the core meaning of anthropomorphism and how this concept could otherwise be interpreted, we will now deal with the question of why humans anthropomorphise. In short, as reported by Daston & Mitman, people anthropomorphise to make sense of what they see or feel. Moreover, anthropomorphism is used to give symbolic value and highlight certain aspects of human experiences (Daston & Mitman 2). In order to express any of these aspects, people need some point of reference, such as language. Although every experience is individual and different, there are some overlaps amongst shared experiences as humans all belong to the same species and thus share mechanisms to process thoughts and emotions. Consequently, we can assume what others might think or feel on the basis of our own experience. This, however, is different for animals which might explain people's tendency to anthropomorphise. Eddy, Gallup & Povinelli summarised this hypothesis well, as they contend that "anthropomorphism is simply a vivid and dramatic instantiation of this introspective modeling capacity" (Eddy, Gallup & Povinelli 88). It can thus be said that humans use anthropomorphism to make sense of non-human agents' behaviour, thoughts and emotions.

2.5.1. Anthropomorphism and the Media

Anthropomorphism has become a commonly used concept in popular culture, particularly in children's entertainment, i.e. in children's movies and literature. As stated by Daston & Mitman, the use of animals in tales has a long history, as it can be found in myths and stories told about valuable life lessons and desirable behaviours, such as Aesop's fables or George Orwell's novel *Animal Farm* (Daston & Mitman 1). Taking animals instead of humans to tell stories helps to reduce the message to its essence. Without the peculiarities of a human character, it is simpler to just convey the desired features and behaviours attributed to a specific

animal. Thus, fables and related genres commonly ascribe certain characteristics to particular animals, e.g. the cunning fox, the brave lion or the loyal dog (Daston & Mitman 9). According to Burke, Copenhaver, & Carpenter anthropomorphism is frequently used in children's entertainment, such as fairy tales, bedtime stories or movies, to educate young people on topics of cultural importance, as well as social belief. The use of animals intends to soften the didactic atmosphere and to make it easier for children to process issues which are either socially or cognitively challenging (Burke, Copenhaver, & Carpenter 210).

Common themes in children's films or books include morals and responsibilities, as well as topics of social importance in general. More precisely, issues which are addressed in a film or a book might include race and social class, respecting differences or gender roles and feminist issues (Burke, Copenhaver, & Carpenter 211). Following Daston & Mitman, anthropomorphism reflects human social hierarchies, sensibilities, social as well as cultural norms and attitudes. As a result, anthropomorphism is also popular in advertising media, as, at least at first glance, it elegantly avoids any issues that might arise with the (mis)representation of different cultures, ethnicities or age groups (Daston & Mitman 6). As Parkinson states, it is important to mention that animals are deliberately depicted in an appealing way, e.g. by using puppies or other young animals that the spectators perceive as cute, or likeable to increase the viewer's engagement (Parkinson 95).

Based on Parkinson's research, it is crucial to note that while anthropomorphism might reveal insights into human social structures or cultural norms, it does not indicate anything about the relationship between humans and animals. Instead, anthropomorphism can be regarded as an object of discourse which is based on the belief that human beings differ from other species. Furthermore, the way this difference is portrayed and discursively deployed is vital as regards the imbalance of power which is linked to anthropomorphism in popular culture. Characteristics such as language, a sense of morality, being able to perceive emotions, consciousness and reason, as well as the concept of having a soul, are commonly regarded as traits which are only attributable to human beings. The aforementioned aspects, or more precisely the possession or lack of these traits and the differences that result from it, have then been vital to maintaining ideological boundaries between human beings and other species, as for instance animals (Parkinson 20).

According to Akshaya & Chellerian, not only in Western culture but also in the cultural space of the East anthropomorphism can frequently be observed in literature and broadcasting media, for example in animes and mangas (Akshaya & Chellerian 8875). However, the self-evidence with which the concept is used in this type of media is often criticised. Parkinson (1), for instance, refers to this problematic use of anthropomorphism in particular relation to Disney movies. She claims that “[t]he overexpression of similitude between humans and other animals has become synonymous with Disney and a set of representational practices apparent in popular culture that reduce other species to simple feathered, furred and scaled human analogues” (Parkinson, 2020, 1).

One main reason for the criticism of the widely assumed anthropomorphism in children’s entertainment regards the lack of differentiation and sensitivity to different species. Moreover, as was convincingly argued by Parkinson, people may use anthropomorphism solely for their interest and thus turn animals into childish human-like creatures, who lack objectivity (Parkinson 1). Weil further emphasises this point of criticism, as he claims that especially in popular culture and media, animals are not perceived as autonomous creatures, who are able to experience pain, as well as pleasure, and as having their individual strengths and weaknesses (Weil 19). He argues that “as a process of identification, the urge to anthropomorphize the experience of another, like the urge to empathize with that experience, risks becoming a form of narcissistic projection that erases boundaries of difference“ (Weil, 2012, 19). Another problem regarding anthropomorphism and its representation in popular culture and media is addressed by Parkinson (2020, 18), namely that: “species difference is at best discounted and at worst erased, to leave us with quasi-human analogues in animal skins, their value residing in a capacity to entertain or fulfil the craving for cute otherness. Anthropomorphism conceived of as narcissistic desire is interminably tied to anthropocentric conceit or some naive misunderstanding of difference [...]”.

In relation to this criticism, the concept of critical empathy arises, which has initially been used in trauma therapy. According to Weil, critical empathy emphasises the importance to express empathy and affect, while maintaining a sense of critical awareness (Weil 20). This concept can also be applied to anthropomorphism, which would then be called critical anthropomorphism. The latter model implies that humans may imagine what animals feel and think, need and are capable of, but that people stop assuming to know all of these aspects. Moreover, “critical anthropomorphism must begin with the acknowledgement that the

irreducible difference that animals may represent for us is one that is also within us and within the term *human*” (Weil, 2012, 21).

In brief, critical anthropomorphism emphasises the fact that humans have to acknowledge animals as agents of their own right, with their individual needs and abilities, which differ substantially from human traits (Parkinson 1). For the analytical part of this thesis, the concept of critical anthropomorphism will be used to address the way that different species of animals are represented in the film. Furthermore, the concept will be a helpful tool to analyse the behaviour of individual characters within the realm of Zootopia.

2.5.2. Anthropomorphism and Disneyfication

Having discussed the role of anthropomorphism in the media, we now turn to the relationship between anthropomorphism and Disney. To be precise, the link between anthropomorphism and a phenomenon called Disneyfication will be addressed.

According to Parkinson’s research, the term Disneyfication is frequently used interchangeably with anthropomorphism, as the former also refers to the attribution of specific human characteristics and cultural stereotypes to animals (Parkinson 29). Disneyfication, similar to anthropomorphism, does not have one distinct definition, but can be defined and interpreted in several ways. Consequently, animated Disney characters are often utilised as points of reference for anthropomorphism and for the allocation of specific stereotypes to movie characters (Parkinson 30). As stated by Parkinson, Disney makes use of the fact that animals who meet the criteria of the *Kindchenschema* commonly evoke empathy in people and help them identify with the respective animals (Parkinson 95). Daston & Mitman provide excellent examples of Disneyfication, namely Bambi and its overly big eyes or the frequent portrayal of young animals like puppies. These are some of the numerous examples used by the producers of Disney movies to attain the goal of emotionally engaging the viewer (Daston & Mitman 11).

Conforming to DoRozario, Disney as a film producer is known for its mastery in hyperreality, which refers to making unreal events or objects appear real and thus, the company also succeeds to effectively anthropomorphise animals and attributing them with human characteristics (DoRozario 51). Although the name might give the impression that this particular phenomenon exclusively applies to Disney films, the concept of Disneyfication goes beyond that. Parkinson (2020, 30) indicates that “Disneyfication and anthropomorphism have become entwined and where they are considered primarily confined to popular culture, concerns have been raised about the impacts of inaccurate nonhuman animal representations on children [or] the public

understanding of other animals [...]”. Thus, we can acknowledge that Disneyfication is not restricted to Disney movies and that this kind of anthropomorphism is highly influential on children and their perception of animals and other non-human agents.

According to Parkinson, one of the main reasons why Disneyfication is a prime example of anthropomorphism is the fact that especially animated films are known to be highly anthropomorphised, as animals often walk like humans or wear clothes. Disney movies predominantly star animated animals as protagonists, who are able to speak and behave like human beings, which is why Disneyfication and anthropomorphism are frequently used synonymously (Parkinson 31). Furthermore, Parkinson assumes that Disney as a company is aware of the impact anthropomorphism may have on people and, thus, similar to many other entertainment companies, invests significant amounts of money and time into strategic anthropomorphism (Parkinson 37). However, a crucial point to note is that Disneyfication does not equal anthropomorphism, but may be considered one possible way of expressing anthropomorphism in popular culture and media. According to Parkinson, Disneyfication is not sufficient to represent all the ways that anthropomorphism is employed in popular culture and media (Parkinson 30).

Another aspect that is frequently associated with Disney films and anthropomorphism is the issue of ‘cuteness’. Parkinson argues that Disney portrays their anthropomorphised animals in an appealing, cute way. The issue with depicting animals in Disney movies as cute is that it tempts spectators to infantilise and trivialise the characters in the film. As further analysis will show, *Zootopia* portrays instances of gender asymmetry and discrimination and especially female characters are frequently not taken seriously. Consequently, portraying these animals as cute reinforces the issues stated above (Parkinson 84).

Geerdts points out that Disney is often criticised for the manner of anthropomorphising animals in its films. Even in documentaries, the company continues to anthropomorphise animals, as the documentary “Chimpanzee” illustrates. Despite a real chimpanzee being portrayed in its natural habitat, the film is criticised for its anthropomorphism, as a narrator verbalises the ape’s thoughts and feelings throughout the documentary. The main critique that scholars have with this sort of anthropomorphism is the issue of language and the animal’s mind. It is problematic to convey the idea that animals think and feel like humans, as this reinforces the human-centred perspective on animals and might promote anthropomorphising real animals as well (Geerdts

10). Reasons for verbalising what the chimpanzee might think and feel may be that the animal appears more appealing to the spectator and creates the phenomenon of cuteness which boosts empathy and identification (Parkinson 91). Another reason for the use of anthropomorphism in documentaries might be to increase viewer engagement. According to Daston & Mitman, if spectators have a heroic character in a documentary, such as the brave lion who defends her children, they are more likely to identify with them and feel more connected to the story (Daston & Mitman 6).

3. Zootopia

The following chapter tackles the Disney Animation Studios film Zootopia. After summarising the content of the film, the main points of appraisal and critique will be addressed and discussed. Finally, the relation between feminism, postfeminism and Disney films in general, as well as Zootopia in particular will be examined. To achieve this goal, the history of Disney movies in relation to feminist development will be investigated and issues like stereotypical gender roles will be connected to Zootopia and Disney movies overall.

3.1. Synopsis

The synopsis follows the content summary of the film Zootopia created by Kevin Lally in 2016. Judy Hopps, a female rabbit, lives with her parents and her 275 siblings in a town called Bunnyburrow, which is located outside the city of Zootropolis. Her parents earn their living with carrot farming, but Judy aspires to leave Bunnyburrow and attend the police academy in Zootropolis. Ever since she was a little bunny, Judy has a strong sense of justice and is not afraid to fight the town's bullies to defend the weaker citizens. The police academy challenges Judy, as she is by far the smallest participant in size and also the only female one. Consequently, she is belittled by her fellow academy candidates and not taken seriously by her trainer. Despite all scepticism, Judy manages to complete the academy as top of her class and becomes a police officer in Zootopia.

However, this is where she encounters even more apathy, as neither her colleagues nor the chief police officer take her seriously. As a result, Judy is only given simple tasks, such as writing parking tickets, while the rest of the department is assigned to the case of finding 14 missing predators. During one of her inspection walks, she encounters a scene of injustice, as two foxes are denied service in an ice cream parlour since they are predators. Judy confronts the owner

and threatens him with the legal consequences of his health code violation, as he is not wearing gloves. She thus manages to help the two foxes and continues her parking ticket inspection. Later that day, she sees the two foxes again and realises that they are con artists who tricked her into helping them. Instead of eating the ice cream, she helped them purchase, they melt it into tinier portions in order to resell it to lemmings. Enraged by their behaviour, Judy confronts one of the foxes, Nick Wilde, about his actions and records his confession of committing a felony. Afterwards, Judy is finally given her first own case – the mysterious disappearance of an otter called Emmitt Otterton, who has been reported missing by his wife. The chief officer, a buffalo called Chief Bogo, who is annoyed by Judy's enthusiasm and persistence assigns the case to her with a deadline of 48h to solve it.

The rabbit officer uses her recording of Nick Wilde to blackmail him into becoming her partner and helping her find the missing mammal. During their investigation, they realise that the missing otter was last seen in a car which belongs to the head of the Zootopian mafia, an arctic shrew called Mr Big. Luckily, Judy Hopps has previously saved the life of the shrew's daughter and he agrees to help them with their investigation (Lally 67).

Mr Big's hint leads the two to the driver who has last seen the missing otter. While questioning him, he reports that the otter has spoken about some mysterious night howlers before he turned savage. Only a few moments later, the driver, who himself is a predator, turns savage and chases the duo. Judy and Nick manage to escape and trace the jaguar back to a laboratory where they find all the missing animals. As they inspect the cages the predators are kept in, they realise that all of them have turned savage. The animals are aggressive and have forgotten how to speak and behave like 'civilised' animals. The duo wants to report their findings to the police as soon as possible, but realise that the mayor of the city was involved in the whole case. Mayor Lionheart being a lion and thus a predator himself, not only knew about this event but also helped to keep it secret so as not to cause an uproar among the population. As a result, the mayor is arrested and his deputy, an inconspicuous sheep named Bellwether, becomes the new mayor of Zootopia (Lally 67).

During a press conference, Officer Hopps mentions that she believes that something has caused the missing animals to return to their primal behaviour, as it is still ingrained in their DNA. This utterance angers Nick and he turns his back on Judy, who later returns to Bunnyburrow as she does no longer feel entitled to be a police officer after the tumult she has caused with her speech.

After Judy returns to her parents, she finds out by chance what has caused the animals' change in behaviour. The aforementioned night howlers were toxic plants which make animals turn savage. She returns to Zootopia to share her newfound knowledge with Nick, who then decides to forgive her and help solve the mystery once and for all.

As the duo investigates who has injected the predators with the toxic substance they realise that the inconspicuous sheep, assistant mayor Bellwether, was the mastermind behind the plan to rid Zootopia of all predators so that prey could finally dominate predators and rule Zootropolis. Nick and Judy manage to report Bellwether to the police, finally solving the crime that has divided Zootopian citizens and reinstalling peace within society. Predators and prey are living in harmony again and have regained their trust in each other (Lally 67).

3.2. Review and Critique

After having summarised the plot of the movie we will now discuss the public opinion towards Zootopia expressed in the media as well as the statements of scholars, such as Muljadi, Bow, Kermode, or Crewe. As summarised by Muljadi, the respective Disney movie has received significant appraisal by critics, as well as an Academy Award, a Golden Globe and the Critics' Choice Movie award (Muljadi 263). On a superficial level, the movie presents a clear message, namely that anyone is able to achieve their dreams if they work relentlessly. This message is also represented in the slogan of the city *Zootropolis – where anyone can be anything* (Howard & Moore 2016). Moreover, the movie indicates at a first glance that discrimination or stereotypes have no validity and should be eliminated. The latter is emphasised by the seemingly harmonious co-existence of predators and prey who live door to door in the city of Zootropolis. The claim that anyone can be anything seems to be proven by the two main characters, as Judy Hopps manages to become the first ever rabbit police officer and Nick Wilde, after believing that foxes are deceitful and cunning and thus earning his living as a con artist, finally becomes Judy's partner and decides to lead an honest life and overcome the stereotypical existence of a fox. Consequently, the two main characters can be taken as role models to show that it is irrelevant which type of animal one is and that everyone, at least in Zootopia is seen as equal (Howard & Moore 2016). A review in the newspaper *The Guardian* states that Zootopia is “a delightfully well-orchestrated parable about trust and tolerance versus panic and prejudice. An encouragingly upbeat celebration of love and diversity in times of hate and uncertainty” (Kermode, 2016).

Based on superficial observations, or positive reviews like the example presented above, especially regarding the two main characters Nick Wilde and Judy Hopps, it could be argued that the movie successfully conveys the message that anyone can be anything and stereotypes or prejudice do not have to be restrictive. On a closer look, however, it becomes evident that Zootopia and its inhabitants are far from living without stereotypes. Judy in her positive and open view of the world and the animals around her represents a minority. Many instances in the movie indicate that the inhabitants of Zootopia indeed rely on stereotypes and prejudices, as Judy's parents for instance insist that she takes fox repellent with her when moving to Zootropolis. An example of discrimination can be observed in the very beginning of the film when Nick Wilde is denied service as he is not an elephant or a herbivore but a predator and thus not entitled to shop at this particular saloon or be in the respective area. This indicates that there are not only territories where certain animals live due to their individual needs, but there are also certain restrictions to places some animals are allowed to go.

Upon closer look, also the open-minded protagonist Judy Hopps is not free from stereotypes and prejudice, as she carries fox repellent with her and is visibly scared of Nick Wilde as he tries to frighten her. This behaviour shows that Judy is not free from prejudice but chose to accept it in certain circumstances (Howard & Moore 72:48 -73:04). Furthermore, following Crewe's research, Zootopia also indicates that it is not enough to be good-willed, as Judy Hopps the good-natured animal is still biased sometimes and has stereotypical thoughts and feelings regarding other animals, as the aforementioned examples illustrate. It can also be argued that the instances of discrimination in the movie show that the animals do not hold prejudice out of malice but rather behave the way they do due to ignorance or a lack of awareness (Crewe 31).

The following example taken from Howard & Moore's film evidently supports this claim:

Judy: "You know, it burns me up to see folks with such backwards attitudes towards foxes. I just wanna say you're a great dad and just a real articulate fella."

Nick: " Oh, well, that is high praise. It's rare that I find someone so non-patronising."
(Howard & Moore 00:21:00-00:21:10)

This conversation between Judy Hopps and Nick Wilde shows that despite her best efforts Judy does not only carry stereotypes against certain species but also is not aware of them. This becomes evident when analysing how offensive and discriminating her comment is. As Crewe claims persuasively, her utterance presumes that according to the prejudice of society against foxes it is atypical for a fox to be a good father and to be able to articulate eloquently (Crewe

31). According to Bow, the distinction between two species, i.e. predator and prey, could be seen as an analogy between animal species and human ethnicity (Bow 325).

By categorising animals and associating specific stereotypes with each species, it becomes evident that the movie portrays modern society. Consequently, it can be argued that Zootopia accurately mirrors what happens in the human world; stereotypes and discrimination are daily issues numerous minorities have to face, some prejudices are deeply ingrained in people's minds without them being consciously aware and governments aspire to keep the status quo in place. Based on research by authors such as Muljadi, it can be concluded that Zootopia does not represent a city free of stereotypes and prejudice, but a place where every animal knows their place and position in society and acts accordingly (Muljadi 245).

3.3. How Zootopia negotiates US Society

Zootopia has received significant attention in the media, as some critics¹ argue that it could be seen as a representation of modern American society. According to Wu, within the United States of America, numerous different ethnicities live together and on a superficial level, it appears that they do so in harmony (Wu 500). However, analysed in more depth, it becomes evident that there is prevailing injustice, discrimination and stereotypes. In the movie, carnivores in general and big predators in particular, represent the mainstream population, as they occupy positions of power, such as mayor or chief police officer. Prey, on the other hand, is often not taken seriously and discriminated because of their size and can thus be said to represent different minorities, even though outnumbering carnivores population-wise. As argued by Chew, some scenes in the movie are representative of American society and its issues, as they highlight that prey is implicitly sceptical towards predators and each species upholds stereotypes against the other (Chew 573). According to Boddice and his research, within the academic field of animal studies, the concept of speciesism describes the bias towards one's species and against other species. The phenomenon of speciesism is perceivable in the film and might act as an analogy to racism within human society (Boddice 224).

Judy telling her parents that she aspires to become a police officer in Zootopia and her parents' reaction, for example, can be seen as an accurate representation of America's society where the majority of the population has certain prejudice against the minorities of the population and said minorities often lack the confidence to pursue their dreams as they have accepted the

¹ such as Wu, Chew, Boddice, or Cramer

stereotypical roles within society. Moreover, certain minorities are still actively discriminated against within the USA and they consequently do not have the opportunity and tools to fight this discrimination (Chew 500).

There are significant parallels and similarities between the treatment of ethnic minorities in America, especially African American citizens and different species in Zootopia. It requires considerably more effort and willpower to be taken seriously in the carnivore society and it is more difficult for prey to obtain a position of power. A clear example of this argument is a conversation between Judy Hopps and assistant mayor Bellwether, who is a sheep. The assistant mayor confesses to having only received her position so the mayor of Zootopia, who is a lion, will receive the vote of the sheep, as they are a significantly big group.

The discrimination that can be seen in Zootopia is however not only one-sided. Prey also actively acts against predators, as Nick Wilde, for instance, is denied access to an ice cream parlour run by elephants because he is not an elephant and thus is not allowed to enter. Furthermore, Nick Wilde is not allowed to join the Junior Ranger Scouts, as they are a group exclusively consisting of prey and not allowing predators in, as they argue that carnivores cannot be trusted (Howard & Moore 00:58:48-00:59:30). Consequently, scholars such as Cramer, conclude that it is, in fact, the predators who can be seen as an analogy to people of colour in America. Following this approach, Judy Hopps represents the so-called anti-racist white hero who is not aware of her stereotypes and prejudices. Additionally, Judy Hopps is presented as likeable and friendly, spectators of the movie are prone to identify with her and interpret her behaviour as the norm. Consequently, according to the above-stated hypothesis of Judy representing the white population in America, her appearance or 'whiteness' is continually portrayed as the norm (Cramer 265).

In short, based on convincing arguments made by Crewe as well as Cramer, it can be said that in the movie animals are treated differently due to their species, size or more generally based on whether they are predators or prey (Crewe 30). According to Crewe's analysis, the film also recognizes that inequality or discriminatory behaviour is not merely directed one way, but that those who are affected by discrimination might discriminate against others themselves. A positive aspect of the obvious presence of stereotypes and prejudice within the movie is that in contrast to numerous other children's movies, Zootopia acknowledges the fact that pure work ethic and perseverance are insufficient to overcome all boundaries of discrimination, inequality

and injustice. Zootopia's diversity of animal species is as clearly portrayed as the multi-level discrimination that comes with it. The way social structures are portrayed in Zootopia accurately describes the difficulties and obstacles which commonly occur in diverse communities (Crewe 30).

Reviewing the two hypotheses mentioned in this paragraph, it becomes evident that, as both appear plausible, another category of analysis is necessary to thoroughly examine the film. As the following chapter will show, gender and the portrayal of gender asymmetries allow a new perspective for the interpretation and analysis of Zootopia and its underlying messages.

3.4. Disney, Zootopia and Feminism

In her article "It's Called a Hustle, Sweetheart" Samantha Seybold argues convincingly that Disney films are often shaped by a patriarchal concept of femininity. Following Seybold's line of argumentation, the traditional Disney princess movie has a pattern of presenting female characters who are portrayed as passive figures, reflecting the current beauty standard and whose only aspiration in life is to marry the handsome, heroic prince. Male figures on the other hand are usually the leading character (Seybold 70). However, as pointed out by Azmi et al., not only in princess movies but in traditional Disney films in general male characters are presented as strong, heroic figures while female characters are frequently portrayed as dependent and in need of help (Azmi et al. 235). Consequently, many scholars, such as Seybold, point out that:

[...] the Disney Co.'s storylines repeatedly normalize female submission to male interests, expectations, power, and leadership. This is problematic because it preserves, idealizes, and values male dominance, rather than gender equality. As such, Disney has historically promoted an idealized depiction of who a woman should be, what she should want, and how she should act which is informed by a patriarchal conception of femininity. (Seybold, 2021, 73)

Based on Azmi et al.'s research, it can be deduced that the development of Disney (princess) films resembles the evolution of feminism. Addressing different phases of feminism and its parallels in the Disney princess world is a crucial base for argumentation in this paper. As the theoretical framework that this thesis is built on follows the argumentation of scholars within the field of feminist and gender studies, it is important to have an in-depth understanding of feminist evolution. Furthermore, connecting different waves of feminism to different periods of Disney princess films enables the reader to compare the parallels and differences between

the female-led film *Zootopia* and modern as well as traditional princess movies with a female lead character.

Taking the first feminist wave as an example, Disney Princess movies that aired at that time were *Cinderella* (1950), *Snow White* (1937) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). According to Pérez, the aforementioned films mark a step backwards in terms of feminist progress and the first Disney princesses represent stereotypical gender roles. All three individuals are treated as properties in their respective movies, waiting for the male hero to rescue them. In addition to portraying the stereotypical damsel-in-distress, the Disney princesses are also withheld their right to freedom, as *Cinderella* and *Snow White* are treated like domestic servants, while *Aurora* is locked in a tower waiting for a male hero to rescue her (Pérez 72). Furthermore, as pointed out by Azmi et al., the female characters in those films show similar features in their appearance and behaviour. Each of them is illustrated as gentle, soft-spoken, and dutiful, while also reflecting the beauty ideal of that time. In terms of feministic traits, those Disney princesses show the least independence and agency, while displaying the biggest lack of power (Azmi et al. 236).

During the second wave of feminism, where the idea of women as domestic figures has severely been challenged, no new Disney princess film aired. Moreover, this feminist revolution combats the stereotypical image of a woman as passive and enduring (Azmi et al. 73). Research done by England, Descartes & Collier-Meek has revealed that movies or TV shows that have been aired after 1980 show less stereotypical behaviours than those produced before this epoch (England, Descartes, & Collier-Meek 556).

According to England, Descartes, & Collier-Meek, in the third wave of feminism, several issues, such as race, gender inequality, and the concept of social class were addressed. During this time, Disney produced several new princess movies, such as *Mulan* (1998), *Pocahontas* (1995) and *The Little Mermaid* (1989) (England, Descartes, & Collier-Meek 74-75). With the progress of feminism also Disney princesses progress in their independence, as some individuals such as *Pocahontas* or *Mulan* deliberately choose to not marry and remain a princess. Regarding their disobedience to patriarchal standards and the societal norm of the time, the aforementioned Disney princesses could be labelled feminist Disney characters.

Consistent with the findings of scholars such as Pérez or Azmi et al., another era of Disney princess films can be detected. This era contains the films *Princess and the Frog* (2009), *Tangled* (2010), *Brave* (2012) and *Frozen* (2013). In contrast to the aforementioned female characters, the protagonists of these films are portrayed as independent, while lacking traditional Disney princess characteristics such as gracefulness or gentleness. Each of the protagonists pursues her own goals without, or with minimum help of a male character. These Disney princesses consequently appear as brave, independent and strong and not in need of male rescue (Azmi et al. 236). The category of Disney princesses in the third wave of feminism closely resembles the female lead character in Disney's *Zootopia*. The common characteristics of said princesses are their independence, the lack of heterosexual romance within the film and the secondary role of a male character. Moreover, male figures in this era are exhibiting more emotions and thus appear more vulnerable. Even though the movie *Zootopia* is not a Disney princess movie, the evolution of Disney films in terms of feminism is portrayed in *Zootopia* and its characters (Pérez 78).

Azmi et al. point out that animated films are frequently directed to a specific gender and children usually notice this phenomenon and learn to choose accordingly. Children not only accept but tend to adopt the gender-specific characteristics, such as appearance and language, they see in films or other forms of children's entertainment, as they prefer to learn from a movie or a show rather than in a formal setting (Azmi et al. 235). Consequently, children who frequently consume animated films or TV shows are prone to adopt more gender-stereotypical characteristics and also expect a certain type of behaviour from others. If the same type of behaviour is regularly attributed to a specific gender, children are likely to identify this behaviour as 'normal' for the respective gender, which does not only shape their own actions and thoughts but also influences their perception of socially acceptable behaviour. Consequently, children may identify certain genders or portrayals of genders with certain characteristics, e.g. a villain that looks female but is defined as a male character might transfer negative prejudices on children.

Scholars, such as England, Descartes, & Collier-Meek argue that even though Disney managed to distance themselves from overly stereotypical gender roles, such as female characters being predominantly passive and performing domestic tasks such as cooking and cleaning, there is no clear break with stereotypical gender behaviour even in the modern Disney films:

With the increase in the breadth of gender roles displayed in these movies, it could be argued that a viewing child would be exposed to more balanced gender role portrayals. However, the middle movies and most current Disney Princess films still retained messages that are reminiscent of traditional roles, and many contradictory gender messages in the later movies should not be discounted despite evidence of overall improvement in egalitarian content. (England, Descartes & Collier-Meek, 2011, 564)

As the quote compellingly illustrates, there has been and continues to be a major difference in the portrayal of male and female characters in movies. Although modern Disney heroines are frequently depicted as independent, adventure-seeking and free-willed, certain stereotypes remain present. While men are frequently shown as masculine, strong and heroic women are commonly portrayed as very feminine, soft and ladylike, despite the progress that Disney films have made (Azmi et al. 236). Another aspect that most Disney movies have in common is that while the portrayal of female characters has sometimes significantly been altered throughout the years, male characters have remained mostly unchanged. They are still shown as physically strong, independent and leading heroic figures (Azmi et al. 236).

Similar to other modern Disney movies, like *Moana* or *Frozen*, *Zootopia* can be characterised as another example of a female-led movie. According to Seybold, a major difference between traditional Disney movies as well as modern Disney Princess movies and *Zootopia* is that *Zootopia* entirely excludes narratives of heteronormative romance. Although the movie appears to be different in terms of a feminist lead character, there are still structural power differences between male and female characters in *Zootopia*. While the male characters within the movie, who are often in powerful positions, are allowed to behave egoistically and controlling, it is not frequent that a female character is able to exert the same behaviour. As soon as a female character, be it the protagonist Judy Hopps or the antagonist Bellwether exerts the same amount of power and leadership, disaster is breaking upon the society of *Zootopia*. While Bellwether's actions lead to a separation between predator and prey, Judy's actions of taking the lead in her partnership with Nick Wilde and ignoring her chief officer's commands endanger the happy end of the movie. This portrays the imbalance between male and female positions of power, which is also supported by a general statement regarding Disney movies by the scholar Samantha Seybold (2021, 72): "Male leadership is depicted as the natural, good order, and conversely female leadership, at both political and interpersonal levels, is depicted as an evil subversion of this natural order". The issue this quote highlights is common in the media industry and a tactic used by many producers. Following Brown, it can be deduced that by

repeatedly depicting a certain ideology, it is rendered invisible and the spectator is convinced that what is shown is in fact natural and normal (Brown 18).

An idea that is frequently linked to feminism and its evolution is postfeminism. According to Genz & Brabon, the concept of postfeminism² arose towards the end of the 20th century in a variety of scholarly contexts (Genz & Brabon 23). In an academic context, the term postfeminism refers mainly to a shift in the perception and construction of gender and gender roles. The post in postfeminism can be understood as a marker of ongoing transformation rather than speaking about something that has come after feminism. Following Seybold's definition, postfeminism advocates that a woman can gain more power by making independent, personal decisions. A potential form of exercising this freedom of choice is material consumption. This aspect is also closely linked to the so-called makeover paradigm where a woman is told to purchase cosmetical products, aesthetic clothing and other tools to create a new self, which will consequently lead to success and freedom (Seybold 74). A major problem that postfeminism encounters is the following:

Postfeminist ideology promotes individual female empowerment and female choice while at the same time legitimating the preservation of patriarchal traditions. In this way, it "entangles" the postfeminist woman by claiming to grant her independence, but simultaneously refusing to acknowledge, and oftentimes subtly celebrating, the oppressive social structures which hold her back. (Seybold, 2021, 75)

Consequently, according to Genz & Brabon, postfeminism is sometimes identified with a sort of backlash, as has been the case after the second world war where women, who previously had to occupy predominantly male-dominated jobs, were pushed back into the domestic sphere (Genz & Brabon 88). Moreover, postfeminism denotes a shift in the traditional ideas of feminism, as well as its comprehension of the relationship between the male and the female gender, which goes further than the commonly known politics of feminism and their perceived peril to heterosexual relationships (Genz & Brabon 35). Postfeminism plays a prominent role in cultural media. The term has been widely used throughout various types of media to indicate a turn away from second-wave feminism. Also, many well-known characters, existing as well as fictional such as Bridget Jones and the Spice Girls can be seen as ambassadors for the term

² a note on the spelling of postfeminism: the choice to omit the hyphen and use it as a single word instead of saying post-feminism has been deliberate, to highlight the fact that postfeminism is a scientific research area on its own and to stress that it is not just a phase that comes after feminism (Genz & Brabon 25-26)

postfeminism in popular culture. This frequent use of postfeminism in popular media has been a reason for criticism as it was claimed that this weakens its academic and analytical potential.

Despite this debate, there has been agreement amongst scholars, such as Seybold or Genz & Brabon, that feminism is no longer external, but an essential part of popular culture which implies that feminist contents are more frequently negotiated (Genz & Brabon 44). As indicated above, the concept of postfeminism per se shows numerous contradictions and is thus often criticized. Genz & Brabon (2018, 96) for instance state that “the paradoxes of contemporary postfeminist femininities [...] reference both traditional narratives of feminine passivity and more progressive scripts of feminine agency.”

According to the research in Seybold’s work “It’s Called a Hustle, Sweetheart”, the female protagonist of the Disney film *Zootopia* Judy Hopps can be seen as a representation of a postfeminist woman, who is struggling with the burdens of double entanglement. The concept of double entanglement has been coined by Angela McRobbie and refers to women’s struggle to make their own decisions, as free personal choice is promoted within feminism, while at the same time adhering to patriarchal standards and societal norms (McRobbie 255). Even though *Zootopia* is a female-led film, upon closer look it becomes clear that most parts of the movie portray male dominance and gender asymmetry, while upholding the image of the female characters as free, independent agents, thus depicting double entanglement (Seybold 77). The friendship between the two main characters is a perfect example of said double entanglement. The male lead character Nick Wilde embodies strengths and skills which Judy lacks and is thus relevant to the success of Judy’s mission. Although Judy has power over Nick by retaining conflicting evidence of his criminal behaviour, Nick is the leading agent in their relationship. Their very first interaction sets the tone for their relationship and clearly displays their dynamic as Nick appears self-confident and witty from the beginning while not taking Judy seriously as a police officer and belittling her (Seybold 79). In short, it can be said that Judy is portrayed as dependent on Nick despite her strengths and abilities.

The female protagonist leverages her strengths, like optimism (which the male character incessantly ridicules), to nurture him and help him to move past his internalized inferiority. She vehemently insists that he possesses incredible inherent value, contrary to what society has told him. Having discovered his troubled past, she does not expect an apology but instead offers encouragement and unconditional acceptance. The female protagonist’s primary role is not to lead, but to offer this support and strengthen the male character so that he can lead her to victory. (Seybold, 2021, 80)

Subsequently, based on the arguments stated above, it could be assumed that while the female protagonist Judy Hopps is free to make her own, independent choices, she uses her power to support the male protagonist and not otherwise (Seybold 80). Their relationship depicts two issues, namely the female character being dependent on male support to succeed and the success of the female protagonist depending on her behaviour, as she has to prove herself in society in order to be taken seriously, while none of the male lead characters has to do the same (Seybold 82). Taking into account the influential role that the Disney company has globally, the way women are portrayed even in modern films shapes society's view on women, as well as the understanding of female norms within Disney's audience (Seybold 71).

4. Analysis

The following chapter will tackle the analysis of the Disney film *Zootopia*. To do so, various aspects of anthropomorphism are examined in more detail, namely the visible aspects of anthropomorphism in *Zootopia*, the stereotypes and prejudices that are depicted throughout the film and how anthropomorphism is used to highlight them as well as the link between gender and anthropomorphism. Furthermore, it will be discussed to what extent gender asymmetry is an issue in the film and which gender, if any, is portrayed as more privileged and powerful. To further analyse this issue, a speech analysis will be conducted in order to identify which gender as well as which species receives more speaking time and how their linguistic behaviour reflects on their social position. The methodological tool of *mise en scène* will be employed to examine how filmic aspects are used to convey certain messages and whether cinematographic tools, such as framing or territorial space are used to reinforce or counteract stereotypes that are present in the film. Finally, the cultural connotations of the animals represented in the film will be addressed, as they may vary according to the broadcasting country.

4.1. Aspects of Anthropomorphism

At the very beginning of the film, *Zootopia* displays the first instance of anthropomorphism that can be observed, namely when young animals perform a school play for their parents. The animals tell the story of how species evolved from primitive predators and prey to civilised creatures who live in peaceful coexistence. While the historical animals walk on four paws, modern animals walk upright, on their back legs, like humans. Moreover, the ancient animals were not dressed while modern animals in *Zootopia* wear clothes, shoes and even accessories.

The normality of wearing clothes is an aspect of anthropomorphism that is particularly highlighted in one scene of the movie. Judy Hopps and Nick Wilde go to a naturalist's club for animals which has a no-clothing policy. Judy is shocked by the fact that all the animals are naked, as to her it is perfectly normal to wear clothes (Howard & Moore 00:38:25-00:39:00). In the gardens of the yoga club, the naked animals are behaving like they would presumably do in nature, as the pigs are in the mud pool, the bears are scratching their backs on palm trees and the hippos are in the water (Howard & Moore 00:38:15-00:38:32). The yak who takes Judy and Nick to see the yoga teacher seems to notice Judy's discomfort and tells her that even though some animals perceive the life in their natural habitat and following their instincts as odd, to him it feels unnatural to see animals in any other way: "Some mammals say the natural life is weird. But you know what I say is weird? Clothes on animals" (Howard & Moore 00:38:45-00:38:52). This scene stresses the heavily anthropomorphised nature of the film, as animals are dressed just like humans and it is considered bizarre to be naked. Judy also reacts to the other animals' nudity in a very human way, namely by turning around and covering her eyes with her hands. Moreover, the animals go to school, and learn about their evolution and how they overcame their primitive behaviours to become morally reasonable creatures (Howard & Moore 00:01:45-00:01:50). The above-mentioned features could be described as instances of human-like physique and are classic examples of anthropomorphised animals.

The animals in the film show further aspects of anthropomorphism, as they essentially lead a human life in the body of a mammal. Predators as well as prey go to school, live in houses or flats, own and drive cars, occupy jobs or pursue studies and use technical appliances such as cameras or phones (Howard & Moore 2016). Furthermore, the animals display human gestures and facial expressions. Taking Judy's journey to Zootropolis as an example, she waves her parents goodbye, while her father starts crying when seeing her leave their hometown Bunnyburrow. As Judy approaches the city of Zootopia, she widely opens her eyes and raises her eyebrows in astonishment (Howard & Moore 00:09:25-00:10:16). Some mimics, however, purposefully include features that only specific animals have, for example, the big ears of a rabbit. When Judy is in a neutral emotional state, happy or excited her ears are up, but when she is sad or frightened, her ears drop and her eyes widen, as images 1 and 2 emphasise (Howard & Moore 2016).



Image 2: Judy Hopps



Image 3: Judy Hopps

The animals in the film *Zootopia* furthermore show emotional behaviour which is commonly perceived amongst humans. Judy for instance displays human-like behaviour and gestures throughout the entire movie. When being interviewed on the missing mammal cases, Judy clearly shows signs of stage fright, having to speak in front of numerous reporters and cameras. She appears to be very nervous and judging from her facial expressions and posture she is unsure of what to say and how to answer the questions she has been asked. This impression is further emphasised by her stuttering and looking for words (Howard & Moore 01:10:36-01:10:42). But not only prey express those features of human behaviour, but also predators do. At the beginning of the film, Nick Wilde's partner is dressed up as a baby and pretends to be Nick's son. When they enter the elephants' ice cream parlour and the shop assistant refuses service to them, Nick's partner starts crying and Nick's face displays sadness and disappointment. The elephant, however, looks down at them angrily, which is another expression of emotion typically perceived amongst humans. When Judy comes to help Nick and his partner, Nick constantly shows an innocent, friendly face to make the shop assistant believe he is nothing but a loving father who wants to buy ice cream for his son. The change in facial expressions and the portrayal of different emotions is thus another main feature of anthropomorphism visible throughout the film *Zootopia* (Howard & Moore 00:19:30-00:19:40).

The animals in *Zootopia* also sometimes behave typically to their nature. Judy Hopps, for example, when agitated or thinking hard, repeatedly and quickly stomps her foot, which is a behaviour that can also be observed with real rabbits and bunnies (Howard & Moore 00:16:33-00:16:35). When Nick takes Judy to see a friend of his at the DMV, who is a sloth, the sloth

speaks very slowly and takes a long time to complete any task. In this particular scene, Nick Wilde points out that there are stereotypes for different species of animals and Judy is not free of them, as he asks Judy “Are you saying that because he’s a sloth he can’t be fast? I thought in Zootropolis anyone can be anything” (Howard & Moore 00:41:20-00:41:30). This scene could also be interpreted as an instance of satirising civil servants, as in western countries, such as Austria, the prejudice prevails that people working as officials are very slow workers.

Furthermore, there is a clear distinction between predators and prey, as herbivore animals are usually portrayed as small and weak while predators commonly are portrayed by big and strong animals who frequently occupy a position of power, such as police officers or mayor (Howard & Moore 2016). Another feature of anthropomorphism that is present throughout the entire film is the stereotypical representation of male and female appearance. Taking Judy Hopps and her family as an example, it is immediately clear which rabbit is Judy’s mother and which is her father, as the female rabbit wears a skirt and a pink shirt, while the male rabbit wears a cap, a checkered shirt and dungarees (Howard & Moore 00:08:26-00:08:30). Taking a look at the other animals in the film, for instance, the ones that exit the train when Judy commutes to the city of Zootopia, it becomes evident that this pattern remains constant for all animals. A male elk leaves the train first, dressed in a shirt, carrying a briefcase as if on his way home from the office. Right behind him, a female Zebra is visible, wearing a pink dress and a handbag (Howard & Moore 00:09:23-00:09:25). In later instances of the movie, we continue to see a clear distinction between how male and female animals dress. Female animals frequently wear jewellery and appear to be wearing makeup, as they exhibit prolonged eyelashes or accentuated lips, while male animals exclusively wear pants or shorts.

Several examples to highlight this observation can be seen throughout the film. One of them is the daughter of the mafia boss in the city of Zootropolis, who is an arctic shrew. Judy saves the shrew’s daughter and her friends while they are on a shopping trip. All three female shrews wear dresses and are accessorised with hats, necklaces earrings and makeup (Howard & Moore 00:30:23-00:30:25). Comparing the police uniform that the animals wear, we can immediately identify a difference between Judy’s uniform, as the only female police officer, and the other officers’ uniforms. All male police officers wear short or long-sleeved shirts and loosely fitting pants, while Judy’s uniform consists of a tight pair of pants and a tightly fitting blouse and her police vest is a dark blue crop top which also fits tightly and thus further accentuates her female body (00:16:14-00:16:15).

The characters in Disney's *Zootopia* also portray an additional aspect of anthropomorphism, namely moral reasoning. According to Paxton & Greene moral reasoning is a conscious mental process to decide whether an action is consistent or inconsistent with other moral principles a person adheres to (Paxton & Greene 516). Said differently, a person or living being with moral reasoning can identify what is right and what is wrong, make judgements based on that insight and act accordingly (Paxton & Greene 516-517). In the film *Zootopia*, several instances of moral reasoning can be observed. One instance of said moral reasoning would be Judy's chase after Weaselton, a criminal weasel, who stole a bag of bulbs. Wanting to catch the weasel to follow her moral obligations as a police officer, she stops the chase in order to save three shrews, who are about to be crushed by a giant doughnut that Weaselton throws towards Judy. She needs to decide whether it is more important for her to catch the thief or save three innocent lives, which implies a moral decision. Her first reaction, which appears to be based on a moral judgement, is to save the mice. In the end, Judy manages to save the mice and catch the weasel (Howard & Moore 00:30:15-00:30:25). According to Tahiroglu & Taylor, anthropomorphised animals are attributed human-like morals and reasoning, which leads to single animals being analysed as individuals rather than their family or species as a whole (Tahiroglu & Taylor 284).

4.2. Anthropomorphism and Stereotypes

The movie *Zootopia* contains plenty of material for analysis. One aspect that is clearly visible throughout the film is the use of anthropomorphism to mirror social stereotypes and highlight the amount of prejudice that prevails in a superficially harmonious community. Right at the beginning of the film, the first instance of these prejudices becomes visible. During a school play, young animals enact the history of predators and prey, where predators are depicted as savage and dangerous, while at the same time highlighting that this was due to their genomics. This story illustrates the fundamental distinction between herbivores who are portrayed as nice and innocent however weak animals and carnivores, who are shown as vicious but strong characters (Howard & Moore 00:01:45-00:01:50). This initial scene sets the tone for the remainder of the film and can be used as the first point of analysis.

As discussed in the theoretical framework, within animal studies the term speciesism is used to describe a bias towards one species over another (Boddice 224). Based on the beginning of the film, it could be argued that the way predators and prey are portrayed favours herbivores over carnivores, as the latter had to "move beyond [their] primitive savage ways" to ensure a peaceful coexistence of both species (Howard & Moore, 2016, 00:01:55-57). However, the definition of

speciesism also entails that one favours one's own species over others. This becomes evident in both ways, as the female protagonist Judy Hopps for example shares her dream of becoming the first ever rabbit police officer in the city of Zootopia, and she is laughed at by the audience. Later, two predators, a fox and a weasel, ridicule Judy for aspiring to be a police officer and thinking she could ever be more than "a dumb carrot-farming bunny" (Howard & Moore 00:05:15-00:05:20).

The aforementioned bias towards one's own species remains constantly present throughout the movie. Taking a closer look at the group of young animals Judy tries to help at the beginning of the film as they get bullied by the fox Gideon Grey and his friend who is a weasel, it becomes evident that the two carnivores are friends and unite against two sheep and a rabbit, i.e. a group of herbivores (Howard & Moore 00:04:18-00:04:20). This pattern is repeated multiple times, as for example when a group of elephants, herbivores, denies service to Nick Wilde and his alleged son, two predators, and tell them to go to an ice cream parlour in their part of town, so the part of town where foxes and other carnivores live (Howard & Moore 00:19:00-00:19:20). Furthermore, the preference for one's own species over another is highlighted once again, as Judy receives her first assignment in her position as a police officer in the city of Zootropolis. While all other animals, who happen to be all predators except an elephant, are assigned to work on the missing mammal case, which is of utmost urgency, Judy is assigned to parking duty. When confronting the chief, another predator, about her assignment and reminding him that Judy finished police academy as best of her class, he tells her that he does not care, but if she is that good of an officer it should be easy for her to write 100 tickets a day (Howard & Moore 00:16:00-00:16:30). This instance clearly demonstrates that Judy is not taken seriously regardless of her outstanding qualifications. As will be addressed in a subsequent chapter, her gender may contribute to her not being seen as qualified. Furthermore, compared to the other police officers in the department, Judy is by far the smallest, as her colleagues are mainly polar bears, tigers, rhinoceroses, wolves and lions.

Finally, the friendship that evolves between Nick Wilde and Judy Hopps throughout the film is noteworthy for several reasons. First, Judy in her role as a police officer represents law enforcement and is a law-abiding citizen herself, while Nick is a known con artist and guilty of multiple small felonies, such as scamming other animals or not reporting income. Second, and even more remarkable, Judy represents the group of herbivores, while Nick being a fox represents predators. Although the population of Zootopia appears to co-exist harmoniously, at

a close look, predators and prey never seem to perceive each other as equals. While prey remains mostly suspicious about predators, the carnivores do not take the herbivores seriously. This shows in the relationship between mayor Lionheart and assistant mayor Bellwether for instance.

Furthermore, as most instances in the movie highlight, species prefer to stay amongst themselves. One example would be the three shrews that Judy saved at the beginning of the film. As a sign of gratitude one of the shrews Judy saved invites Judy and Nick to her wedding, where apart from Judy, Nick and Mr Big's bodyguards the polar bears, only shrews or other mice are present (Howard & Moore 00:30:20-00:51:20). Besides Judy and Nick, the film does not show any cross-species friendships, which makes their relationship even more special. It has to be noted, however, that neither Nick nor Judy are free of prejudice. While Nick does not take Judy seriously at the beginning of their friendship, for instance by calling her "fluff" or "cute little bunny" repeatedly, Judy remains suspicious of foxes in general, as she continues to carry her fox repellent with her, even when their business relationship turned to a friendship (Howard & Moore 2016).

The scenes described above clearly illustrate two issues which are present in the fictional reality of Zootopia as well as in the real world, namely the problem of stereotypes against a certain group of people, or in the case of Zootopia animals, and othering. Since animals in Zootopia are heavily anthropomorphised, as the paragraphs above showed, it can be assumed that the species of animals act as representatives for people of different cultures, social groups or ethnicities. The stereotypes that are held against herbivores, in general, is their lack of strength and power, which will be further addressed in the subsequent chapter. Predators are often perceived as deceitful and not trustworthy.

Although the animals in the film Zootopia portray typically human characteristics, some aspects and stereotypes about each respective species remain unchanged. It has to be stated, however, that the stereotypes shown in the film are based on a western-centric perspective and could be different in other contexts. On her commute to Zootropolis, for instance, Judy sees camels who live in the Sahara Square, a desert outside of the city (Howard & Moore 00:01:45 – 01:38:18). Judy, for example, states that her species is good at reproducing, which is highlighted by her many siblings and also the cliché that rabbits love to eat carrots is emphasised by the profession of most bunnies in Bunnyburrow, namely carrot farmers (Howard & Moore 2016). In a later

instance of the film, Judy is introduced to an elephant yoga teacher, who is expected to remember everything about her last encounter with a missing otter due to her nature (Howard & Moore 00:38:55-00:38). Judy's encounter with Flash, a sloth who works at the department of motor vehicles (DMV), makes another example of stereotypes regarding certain animal species. Judy emphasises multiple times that she is in a hurry and has to get the information she needs as soon as possible and is clearly startled by the fact that all employees at the DMV are sloths. She disappointedly says that they will not be able to get what they need quickly, due to the employees being the kind of animal they are. Nick responds to her utterance sarcastically: "Are you saying that because he is a sloth he can't be fast?" which further highlights the common stereotype portrayed in this scene (Howard & Moore, 2016, 00:41:24-00:41:28). Conversations between Nick Wilde and Judy Hopps provide further examples for stereotypes that are commonly associated with specific animal species. Nick asks Judy if she thinks that the assistant mayor Bellwether counts her own species when going to sleep, as counting sheep is a common practice amongst people in the Western world when not being able to fall asleep (Howard & Moore 01:02:18-01:02:20).

Numerous scenes in the movie clearly portray the issue of othering, as Judy Hopps' father, for example, warns her of weasels in the city of Zootopia while being reminded by his wife that he plays cricket with a weasel himself. He replies that although this weasel is different from others, as in not being dangerous, it still is not trustworthy, as it cheats every time. This conversation clearly illustrates the issues that prejudice and othering have in common, namely creating us and them. While Judy and other herbivores are the 'us' that her father refers to, carnivores such as weasels are the 'them' that Judy should be careful with. Following Judy's story, more instances of this pattern become visible, for example when she moves to the city of Zootropolis. Her parents give her a fox repellent and ask her to take it with her at all times. Judy says that she does not need anything like that and that she does not think it is fair of her parents to assume that all foxes are dangerous. When her parents counter her argument with the scar she carries from the incident with Gideon Grey the fox, Judy replies: "Gideon Grey was a jerk who happened to be a fox", showing that she tends to think of this particular fox as a bad individual rather than a representative of a bad species (Howard & Moore, 2016, 00:08:50-00:08:56).

Later in the movie, namely on her first day as a police officer in Zootopia, Judy shows that she is not free from negative stereotypes herself, regardless of what she told her parents. This is displayed as she leaves for work and initially decides to leave the fox repellent at home. Having

second thoughts, she turns around and takes it with her (Howard & Moore 00:13:21-00:13:31). This scene illustrates that although Judy claims to not have any prejudice against foxes, as opposed to the citizens of Zootropolis, her decision to take the fox repellent with her emphasises that some part of her believes those stereotypes and makes her suspicious about foxes. This claim is supported later in the film as Judy enters the elephant's ice cream parlour after she sees Nick Wilde and his alleged son enter. Judging from her facial expression and her careful observation of the interaction between Nick Wilde and the shop assistant, it becomes clear that she decided to follow the foxes into the elephant's store as she was suspicious of them and their intentions. Judy opening the holster of the fox-repellent attached to her belt, ready to take it out and use it against Nick further emphasises the statement made above (Howard & Moore 00:17:55-00:18:50). Overhearing the conversation Nick has with the shop assistant, Judy realises that her suspicions were wrong and she was led by her prejudice and stereotypes about foxes.

Judy and Nick's encounter with some wolves can be seen as another instance of prejudice against stereotypical animal behaviour. When Nick is almost being caught by one of the timber wolves Judy imitates their howling, as Nick claims that they have to follow their natural instincts and start howling too as soon as they hear another wolf do so (Howard & Moore 01:04:15-01:04:25). This scene portrays that despite their heavily anthropomorphised and civilised behaviour, the animals of Zootopia have some instincts they cannot resist to follow. Those instincts are also responsible for the mistrust amongst herbivores towards predators. As has been mentioned in previous sections, predators and prey carry certain stereotypes regarding the other species. When being confronted by numerous news reporters Judy states that the mammals who went savage are all predators and that she supposes it is in some relation to their DNA:

It may have something to do with biology. A biological component, you know, something in their DNA. What I mean is thousands of years ago, predators survived through their aggressive hunting instincts. For whatever reason, they seem to be reverting back to their primitive, savage ways. (Howard & Moore, 2016, 01:11:08-01:11:39).

After being confronted by Nick about her utterance Judy replies: "It's not like a bunny could go savage", clearly displaying an instance of speciesism, showing that she has more trust and positive associations with her own species. After realising that Nick has been offended by her statement to the press she argues that he is different from the other foxes which further upsets Nick as it exhibits the underlying stereotypes that Judy carries with her (Howard & Moore, 2016, 01:11:08-01:11:39). This scene illustrates multiple occasions of social stereotypes. First

of all, a clear bias towards one's species becomes noticeable, while simultaneously showing that neither animal in the film is free from prejudice or stereotype. Furthermore, Judy's utterance creates a clear distinction between Nick, the good predator and the predators that became savage. This shows that although Judy trusts Nick, she sees him as a positive exception from the rule, thus establishing two groups, the good animals which she thinks of as 'us' and the animals that went savage which she perceives as 'them'.

Further issues that are portrayed throughout the film highlight the discrepancy between how Judy Hopps perceives herself and how she acts. As mentioned above, according to herself she is free from stereotypes and prejudice and aspires to contribute to the idea of Zootopia to let anyone be anything. This becomes evident when Judy helps Nick Wilde and another fox who pretends to be his son to get ice cream in a shop that is for elephants. The shop assistant tells Nick and his alleged son to leave the place as they are not herbivores and thus have no right to be there. Nick explains to Judy that his 'son' loves elephants and wishes to be an elephant one day. Touched by this story, Judy helps the two foxes purchase ice cream and tells the smaller fox, who pretends to be a toddler, that he should not listen to the elephant and he can be anything he wants (Howard & Moore 00:21:20-00:21:27). This scene illustrates that Judy's intentions are good and she aspires to fight for a world with equal rights and without prejudice.

The subsequent scene, however, shows that Judy herself is not free of stereotypes either. Judy tells Nick that she is disappointed in some citizens of Zootopia for having "such a backward attitude towards foxes" while in the next sentence calling him a "great dad and a real articulate fella" (Howard & Moore, 2016, 00:20:56-00:21:10). This statement suggests that it has to be pointed out that a fox can be articulate and a good father, as in saying that this is not the norm. Nick's response confirms that claim, as he tells Judy that it is delightful to encounter someone as non-patronising as her, clearly being sarcastic (Howard & Moore 00:21:08-00:21:10). This conversation can be seen as another instance of othering, judging from Judy's statement, predators, or at least foxes are not likely to be good parents and if they are, it is something noteworthy. Thus, her utterance creates a group of good parents, which is 'us' and most probably herbivores, as, for instance, Judy's parents have multiple children they care for, versus the 'others' who are most likely predators.

Referring to Crewe's research on the film Judy's clearly offensive, however good-intentioned statement highlights another problem that can be linked to real-life society, namely her use of

the word 'articulate'. According to Crewe, this word is frequently used to describe African American citizens when trying to be polite, the remark itself remaining racist nonetheless (Crewe 31). Based on Crewe's line of argumentation, this observation can be taken even further, as Judy's comment clearly indicates a form of othering, referring to Nick as an exception from the rule, a form of speciesism, or in human context racism that many African Americans or people of minority groups have to face on a daily basis (Crewe 31). Not only Judy's utterance about Nick shows the stereotypes that prevail in Zootopia. When entering the ice cream parlour the elephant tells Nick to leave his premises and asks if "there aren't any fox ice cream joints in your part of town" which he could go to (Howard & Moore 00:19:00-00:19:10). This remark can again be transferred to human society, where people of different ethnicities or minority groups are often told to stay with their own kind or go back where they came from, or if seen in a more historical context to a time where people of colour were not allowed in certain parts of town, shops or other places (Wu 500).

Further scenes from the film support the claim made in the previous paragraph, as after Judy claims that the missing mammals have all been predators and went savage because of their DNA, a strong distrust arises in the community of Zootopia and herbivores protest for a city free from dangerous predators. This is emphasised as a pig tells a cheetah to "go back to the forest" as in to go back where he belongs. Another scene shows a bunny and her child commuting on public transport, comfortably sitting on their seats. When a tiger, dressed in a suit, sits down next to them the bunny mother looks worried and pulls the child closer to her (Howard & Moore 01:14:24-01:14:33).

Even the friendly receptionist at the police station Benjamin Clawhauser, an overweight cheetah, is moved to a different department as the police do not think it is a good idea for the animals of Zootropolis to have a predator as the first face they see when they enter the station (Howard & Moore 01:15:10-01:15:19). These examples illustrate a problem which is common in human society, namely that people native in a country frequently merely tolerate the presence of minorities or other ethnicities in their home countries or cities. This can be compared to having guests; as long as they are well-behaved, based on culture-specific criteria, they are welcome to stay, however, as soon as their behaviour does not meet the criteria of a certain culture, numerous people will ask for them to leave or be removed from their country. According to research done by Little et al., the definition of a minority or a subordinate group

includes this issue of being marginalised, not accepted or only accepted under particular circumstances (Little et al. 329).

4.3. Anthropomorphism and Gender

The villain in the film *Zootopia*, a sheep named Bellwether, is the perfect example of the use of anthropomorphism to convey certain gender stereotypes. The way the animal is illustrated in the film, namely as a small, fluffy sheep with big glasses, wearing dresses and having a shy and clumsy character, the assistant mayor Bellwether is perceived friendly and harmless (Howard & Moore 01:01:05-01:01:15). According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, referring to someone as sheeplike infers that the person is meek, submissive or stupid (Merriam-Webster). Consequently, sheep are commonly associated with characteristics such as calmness, friendliness and most importantly harmlessness (Merriam-Webster). According to Thornham, in a human context, those personality traits are commonly attributed to women. For a woman to enter a role of power, she has to take on characteristics that contradict the norms of stereotypical female behaviour, namely agency, action or the occupation of public space (Thornham 69). This pattern also becomes visible in the film, as the assistant mayor Bellwether is inconspicuous, calm and overly friendly for the majority of the movie. Moreover, she is commonly portrayed behind the mayor, being in his shadow and barely noticeable as the mayor is a big lion occupying an abundant amount of space, leaving little to no room for his vice-mayor (Howard & Moore 2016). When the assistant mayor finally exposes herself as the mastermind behind the agenda against predators, a phenomenon regarding a change in power described by Seybold can be observed (Seybold 72). According to Seybold male leadership is commonly assumed to be the natural order and if a woman takes leadership, it is portrayed as a negative change, an aspect that is clearly visible in the aforementioned part of *Zootopia* (Seybold 72).

A common issue that is frequently addressed in feminist literature is gender asymmetry when it comes to positions of power. According to Isaacs, men frequently occupy powerful positions, while women are usually in less influential positions (Isaacs 131). Any position of significant power that is shown in *Zootopia* is occupied by a male animal, while the female characters in *Zootopia* only occupy subordinate positions. An example to support this claim is the mayor and vice-mayor of Zootropolis. While the mayor is a big, male lion, the vice-mayor is a small, female sheep. Their difference in power and authority is thus emphasised by their difference in size. The image of the powerful lion and the small, weak sheep is further emphasised by the

mayor clearly not taking his assistant seriously and frequently running into her or giving her commands rather than asking for her help (Howard & Moore 00:07:38-00:08:05).

In a later instance of the film, the asymmetrical relationship of power between the mayor and vice-mayor is highlighted once again as assistant mayor Bellwether chases mayor Lionheart with a staple of files she needs to discuss with him, but he just brushes her off. Later, Nick and Judy ask for the vice-mayor's help to investigate their case and she admits to them that she has never been assigned a task as important as this. When Bellwether takes Nick and Judy to her office, which is a storage room, she tells Judy that she perceives herself more as a glorified secretary, as she is convinced that the mayor only hired her to obtain the votes from the sheep community as they are big in number (Howard & Moore 01:01:42 – 01:01:50). Even the protagonist Judy Hopps who aspires to obtain a position of power by joining the Zootropolis police force is not taken seriously as a team member and told by the chief officer numerous times that she is not qualified for this occupation. Other animals, who are predominantly male, such as Nick Wilde, Gideon Grey or Judy's colleagues at the police station continuously state their scepticism about Judy being a police officer and frequently show or tell her that they do not take her, or her ambition seriously (Howard & Moore 2016).

This imbalance of power is further highlighted by the choice of animals in the film *Zootopia*. As stated above, the male characters in positions of power are big, strong animals, like buffalos or lions, while the female characters are represented by small herbivores, such as sheep or rabbits (Howard & Moore 2016). Another example of the imbalance of power amongst genders is Mr Big and his clan. While Mr Big is an arctic shrew, which is a particularly small mouse, he is nevertheless a very powerful character who other animals not only respect but also fear. The bodyguards of Mr Big, who is the head of the criminal organisation of a district in Zootopia, are polar bears and all of them are male. Also Mr Big himself is male and the only other female character who appears in his circle is his daughter. Following a common stereotype described by Jaworska & Larivée, female characters in films are often focused on their appearance but do not have any influence or power. Further, according to Jaworska & Larivée women are frequently portrayed as superficial and less competent than men (Jaworska & Larivée 2477). This phenomenon can be observed when analysing the image of Mr Big's daughter conveyed in the film. The female shrew is first portrayed shopping with her friends and gossiping about clothes and in a later instance of the film, we can see her at her wedding where she is dancing

with her friends and complaining about her father's business (Howard & Moore 00:50:30-00:50:36).

Towards the end of the film, another instance of imbalance between gender in terms of power becomes visible. The assistant mayor Bellwether is exposed as the antagonist of the film and the animal behind the agenda against predators. She tries to chase down Judy and Nick, who exposed her scheme and want to save further predators from being attacked. Even though the vice-mayor is the villain in the story and clearly had the mental capacity and power to execute her plan against predators, she is accompanied by male sheep, who are significantly taller and stronger than her (Howard & Moore 01:29:00-01:29:05). This further emphasises the image of female characters described by Thornham, namely that women are dependent on men. In the case of Zootopia Bellwether, the female sheep lacks power and strength and needs male support to succeed (Thornham 69).

The relationship between Judy and Nick further contributes to this imbalanced image of gender, as Nick represents the rational part of the duo, by calmly presenting arguments and rarely becoming emotional, while Judy appears to be more driven by feelings. Straight from the beginning of the film this pattern can be observed, as Judy is obviously touched by the story Nick tells about his alleged son wanting to be an elephant and consequently decides to help them (Howard & Moore 00:19:-00:19:25). Although Judy also uses rational arguments to outwit Nick or force him to help her, for instance by stating the felonies he has committed, Judy is frequently portrayed as more emotional. One concrete example can be seen towards the end of the film when Judy apologises to Nick and cannot do so without crying. She calls herself all the belittling things Nick used to say to her, such as a dumb bunny. Thereby Judy shows that instead of admitting she made a mistake she is questioning herself and her character as a whole, while Nick or other male animals are able to apologise without belittling themselves (Howard & Moore 00:19:20-01:21:15).

Her apology and the way she speaks about herself could be explained through the way other animals act towards her. Animals who support and love her, like her parents tell her to give up on her hopes and aspirations and settle, so she would never be disappointed. They also tell her that it is not only difficult but impossible to become a police officer, as no rabbit has ever joined the police and that the city of Zootropolis is too dangerous for her. Other animals, like Chief Bogo the police officer frequently tell her that she is naïve, not part of the team and thus not a

real police officer or not capable of being a police officer due to her nature. The latter argument is emphasised by Chief Bogo's constant criticism towards Judy and by one utterance in particular, namely when Judy is confronted by the Chief. She tries to convince him that the Jaguar Nick and her interviewed turned savage and chased them and he tells her that probably any aggressive predator seems savage to a rabbit like her (Howard & Moore 00:56:10-00:56:15).

Furthermore, Judy is often called belittling or ridiculing names like "fluff", "carrot face" or "fuzzy bunny" and is often told that she will never be able to make her dreams become reality, as for example by her trainer in police academy who tells her to: "quit and go home" (Howard & Moore, 2016, 00:06:40-00:06:43). What appears to be a form of speciesism in the film can be transferred to sexism in real life. According to Manne, sexism emphasises beliefs and stereotypes about genders that result in men being perceived as more competent, powerful and capable than women, thus putting men in a more advantageous social position (Manne 80).

4.4. Gender Asymmetry

According to Jaworska & Larrivée, female characters in film or literature are frequently portrayed as less skilled or competent than their male counterparts (Jaworska & Larrivée 2477). Consequently, female lead characters are often dependent on their male associates to succeed, as they do not have the necessary resources or the power on their own (Jaworska & Larrivée 2477).

Some scenes in the Disney film *Zootopia* also depict this issue as Judy Hopps, the female lead character, is often dependent on the help of a male character to solve a problem. Her pursuit of the missing mammal Mr. Otterton is a clear example of the gender asymmetry that prevails throughout the film. In order to find the missing predator, Judy relies on Nick Wilde to help her by providing her with relevant information and connecting her with the right people (Howard & Moore 00:35:00-00:36:00). Judy's confrontation with Chief Bogo, who had to rescue them after they have been chased by a predator who turned savage, portrays another instance of the imbalance between power. The chief of Zootopian police tries to fire Judy by arguing that she missed her 48h target to find Mr. Otterton and only after Nick's persuasion Chief Bogo agrees to grant Judy more time to solve the case. This scene highlights the gender asymmetry in the film even further as Judy introduces Nick Wilde as the key witness for her case and Chief Bogo replies to her that he refuses to believe a fox. However, although being suspicious about Nick's

species, Chief Bogo takes him more seriously than Judy as he eventually allows Judy to continue her search based on Nick's convincing arguments. Nick accuses the police officer to have given Judy an insolvable case with the amount of time granted to her, as he points out that the whole department has not been able to solve the missing mammal issue in two weeks and Chief Bogo has thus set Judy up for failure (Howard & Moore 00:56:23-00:57:27). This scene highlights gender asymmetry in three different ways. First of all, Chief Bogo chooses to listen to Nick Wilde, who he previously stated to be suspicious about, which gives the impression that his only reason to listen to Nick's arguments is his gender. Secondly, the character of this respective scene conveys the idea that Judy is dependent on Nick's help to talk to the chief of police in order to be treated fairly. Lastly, based on Nick's aforementioned statement, it can be concluded that Chief Bogo does not think Judy is capable of being a police officer and wants her to resign, which is why he purposefully set her a target that she is very likely to miss (Howard & Moore 00:56:00-00:57:00). As the chief stated in the beginning of the movie, he is well aware of Judy's outstanding qualifications to join the police, however, he still assigns parking duty to her and tries to make her fail on purpose. Consequently, it can be argued that his antipathy towards Judy is based on her being a female rather than her being a herbivore.

Another issue that is prominent in the Disney film *Zootopia* is the fact that heroines are frequently marginalised. As convincingly argued by Thornham, female heroes are often singled out by society, as they do not comply with the social stereotype of a woman, namely being passive and a secondary character to men (Thornham 69). In the case of *Zootopia*, we can see that Judy, who is the female lead character and heroine of the film, is marginalised because of her wish to become the first bunny police officer. This manifests in the very beginning of the film, when the children of Bunnyburrow's elementary school enact a historical play about the evolution of predators and prey. While the audience seems to be in agreement with the fact that carnivores were able to overcome their natural instinct to live peacefully amongst herbivores and they create one harmonious society, some of the animals watching the play start laughing when Judy shares her dream of becoming Zootropolis' first rabbit police officer. It is not the profession itself, that makes the audience laugh, as they applaud for a sheep that aspires to be an astronaut and a cheetah who wants to work as an actuary. The fact that Judy as a small herbivore decides to join the police, however, seems ridiculous to the audience, which indicates that most of the animals do not take her wish seriously (Howard & Moore 00:02:14-00:02:46).

This message is emphasised in a later scene, where Gideon Grey a fox who bullies a group of small animals tells Judy that her dream will never become reality, as all she will ever be is: “a stupid, carrot-farming, dumb bunny” (Howard & Moore, 2016, 00:05:20-00:05:22). In order to pursue her dream of becoming the first rabbit police officer, Judy has to leave her hometown and family behind and join the police academy, which further isolates her. Due to her physique and size Judy is massively disadvantaged compared to the other candidates at the academy and thus excluded from the rest of the group. Only with significantly more work she is able to successfully complete police academy which further supports the claim made above that female heroes experience isolation and have to perform remarkably better in order to stand out (Howard & Moore 00:06:10-00:07:16).

The pattern of separation continues throughout the film, starting with Judy entering her new flat in Zootropolis. Trying to introduce herself to her landlord and her new neighbours she is shrugged off by both and left alone inside her apartment. The marginalisation continues once Judy joins the police force, where she is excluded from the group of other police officers in several ways. First, as has been mentioned earlier, Judy is not only significantly smaller in size than the other animals of her task force, but it seems that she is also one of few, if not the only female police officer in her department. Additionally, she is further separated from the team by being assigned a different task than the rest, as her colleagues are told to collaborate on the missing mammal case while Judy is giving parking duty (00:12:52-00:16:07).

4.5. Speech Analysis

Scholars such as Lakoff, Holmes or Sanli have proven in their research that speech and power are indisputably interlinked. In general, it can be stated that it is often more important who the speaker is, than the utterance of the speaker itself, as speaking, especially in public, carries power (Sanli 287). Consequently, this chapter will focus on the analysis of linguistic behaviour and speech patterns in the film Zootopia. To be precise, the use of tentative and assertive language will be investigated, with a special focus on the use of tag questions, namely whether modal or assertive tags are used, the individual speaking time in a dialogue as well as instances of hedging and boosting. Furthermore, emphasis will be put on the way that male animals in Disney's Zootopia speak about female animals of their own or other species and whether mixed-gender interactions show a different linguistic pattern than single-gender conversations. The intention behind the aforementioned part of the analysis is based on Carli's research which

shows that women use tentative speech more often in interactions with men than they do in female-only conversation (Carli 1946). According to other researchers, such as Fishman, linguistic behaviour and patterns of speech reflect social structures and imbalance in power (Fishman 1975). Therefore, comparing the use of tentative and assertive language in mixed-gender interactions in *Zootopia* helps to identify patterns of speech and uncover gender asymmetries in the film.

To make the analysis easier to follow, it is important to mention that the basic concept of the relationship of language and gender introduced by Robin Lakoff in 1973 will be used, however, with significant adaptations. First of all, the labels tentative and assertive language will be used in order to identify different linguistic behaviours. Furthermore, following Holmes' argumentation the influence of other factors than gender, namely species and social status will be taken into account in order to obtain a more representative outcome (Holmes 2017). Lastly, it has to be mentioned that the outcomes of this analysis do not automatically establish a link between a linguistic feature, such as a tag and a specific characteristic, such as lacking confidence. The intention of this analysis is to identify patterns of speech and analyse whether there is a difference in linguistic behaviour between male and female characters in the film. Additionally, this speech analysis investigates to what extent the representation between male and female animals differs on a linguistic level and which type of speech is used more frequently by whom. The overall goal is to identify the purpose of individual linguistic items in order to understand whether specific stereotypes are reinforced through a character's way of speaking and how characters are spoken about.

It has been addressed by scholars such as Janet Holmes that in a conversational context it is more important who speaks than what is being said (Holmes 2003). Holmes explains this phenomenon by arguing that men generally take up more speaking time in a conversation and address the receiver more directly than women do. As men frequently obtain positions of power, they feel less inclined to exert their right to speak, contrary to the common stereotype that women speak more than men (Holmes 2003). Consequently, the first part of the speech analysis will focus on the amount of time that each animal taking part in a conversation or a dialogue takes up speaking. Another factor that will be addressed when analysing each animal's speaking time is who started and ended a conversation. According to Wilkinson & Kitzinger taking turns in a conversation and directing it can be seen as an exercise of power. Consequently, I would argue that the intentions of a character starting or ending a conversation are worth investigating

as they provide insights into the distribution of power amongst interlocutors (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 556).

Taking a conversation between the female lead character Judy Hopps and the higher-ranking police officer Chief Bogo for example, it can be observed that despite Judy being the one who initiated the conversation in order to address a remark on her assignment, Chief Bogo ends the conversation by simply leaving the room (Howard & Moore 00:16:10-00:16:29). The Chief's behaviour demonstrates that he has more power in the conversation than Judy, as he ends the conversation and thus dismisses Judy's request by leaving and turning his back on her (Howard & Moore 00:16:10-00:16:30). In this concrete example of a mixed-gender conversation several other factors have to be taken into account in order to thoroughly understand the distribution of power between the two animals. First of all, it has to be considered that Chief Bogo is the lead of Judy's team and thus has more authority than Judy, who is not only a police officer under Bogo's command but also the newest member on the team. Furthermore, Chief Bogo's decision to assign parking duty to Judy despite her outstanding qualifications depicts how he thinks of her. Consequently, I would argue that although Judy occupies more speaking time in the dialogue, with a total of 16 seconds compared to Chief Bogo's 4 seconds of speaking, Chief Bogo remains the more dominant entity, as his attitude towards Judy demonstrates that he does not consider this conversation worth his time (Howard & Moore 00:16:09-00:16:30). Consequently, I believe that not only the time of speaking but the intent of the conversation, as well as its formal setting is relevant to determine who maintains more power. Additionally, the tone of voice and manner of speaking is an influential aspect to take into account. To be precise analysing whether utterances are made calmly or agitatedly, loudly or silently impacts the way a statement and a speaker is perceived. As stated by Eagly, female characters are frequently said to be more emotional than male characters which will become evident in the following examples (Eagly 16).

Looking at another conversation between Judy and Chief Bogo, all of the aforementioned factors can be seen in use. First of all, Chief Bogo initiates the conversation with a sarcastic statement and puts Judy in a position to explain herself. After she does so, in a way that can be described as nervous and agitated, Chief Bogo angrily tells Judy that she has to quit, according to the deal he made with her. Judy still trying to explain what she saw is repeatedly interrupted by Chief Bogo who does not care to listen to her (Howard & Moore 00:55:41-00:55:45). In this particular conversation, Chief Bogo takes up more speaking time, with a total of 22 seconds,

compared to Judy who only spoke 17 seconds. What is even more striking is the flow of the conversation. While Judy tries to explain herself in order to make Chief Bogo believe her throughout the whole dialogue and thus putting herself in a defensive, less powerful position, the Chief openly voices his disbelief and interrupts Judy's utterances multiple times. Following the arguments made by Wilkinson & Kitzinger, Chief Bogo repeatedly interrupting Judy can be interpreted as male dominance and a sign of power. While interrupting the other speaker sometimes results from a mistake, this scene shows that Chief Bogo purposefully interrupts Judy as he disregards turn-taking rules which can thus be interpreted as a hostile interruption and a sign of dominance (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 560).

The first lengthy conversation between Judy and Nick provides another example of the distribution of speaking time and how it reflects on the imbalance of power between the two speakers. In this dialogue, Judy accuses Nick of being insincere and pursuing illegitimate business. Analysing the amount of time each speaker uses to speak throughout the conversation demonstrates that Nick takes up most of the speaking time, as he talks for 68 seconds in total, while Judy only contributes for a total of 19 seconds. Furthermore, the way each of them speaks is a relevant point for this investigation, as Nick uses belittling terms to speak about Judy in several instances, such as "sweetheart", "Carrots", "naïve little hick", or "cute, fuzzy wuzzy little tail" (Howard & Moore 00:23:42-00:25:13). Those terms and the condescending way he speaks to and about Judy illustrate that he does not take her seriously and he is in no way intimidated by her, thus also not acknowledging her authority as a police officer. Judy, on the other hand, seems to be disappointed by Nick's behaviour, which she emphasises by saying that she stood up for him and his alleged son and he lied to her. The behaviour observed in this scene has been described by Seybold as an instance of gender asymmetry and the stereotypical portrayal of Judy as a female character (Seybold 80). This statement being her first utterance highlights that she is portrayed as more emotional as well as the fact that she called Nick a liar rather than a criminal (Howard & Moore 00:23:42-00:23:50). Another aspect that contributes to the impression of Nick being the one in power within the conversation is the way the interaction takes place. While Judy confronts Nick with what he did, he simply turns his back on Judy and walks away, thus literally taking the lead in this interaction. Judy continues to chase him throughout the conversation, and although Nick does not run from Judy, he physically and conversationally creates distance between them. To conclude their conversation, Judy is stuck in wet cement and Nick looks down on her, which emphasises the image created throughout their dialogue (Howard & Moore 00:23:42-00:25:23).

To further investigate the relation between language and gender, several mixed-gender interactions between Judy and Nick Wilde, the two lead characters, a conversation between Judy and the receptionist Benjamin Clawhauser as well as between Judy and her supervisor Chief Bogo, and conversations between mayor Lionheart and assistant mayor Bellwether will be analysed. While the interaction between Judy and Nick and Judy and Benjamin show two equals regarding their level of authority, both the interactions between Judy and Chief Bogo, as well as the dialogues between assistant mayor Bellwether and mayor Lionheart provide examples of interactions between representatives of two different levels of authority and influence. Additionally, interactions between Judy and assistant mayor Bellwether will be examined to compare the use of tentative and assertive language in mixed-gender conversations to the respective use in exclusively female conversations. To facilitate comparison, the categories of hedges and boosters, as well as some of their sub-categories, and the precise division of tags, namely modal tags, facilitative tags, softening tags will be used.

Comparing two interactions between the main characters Nick Wilde and Judy Hopps using the analytical tools mentioned above, it becomes evident that tentative and assertive language are not used equally amongst the two characters. While the first conversation that is investigated is the initial dialogue Judy and Nick have, the second interaction that is analysed takes place towards the end of the film, when Judy apologises to Nick. Both conversations show different patterns of speech and differ from each other substantially.

In the first interaction, a small amount of both tentative and assertive language is used and the conversation can be described as neutral in terms of linguistic choices. Interestingly, the only instance of hedging in the conversation comes from Nick, however, only in the context of talking about Judy and her dreams of becoming a real police officer in Zootropolis (Howard & Moore 00:23:00-00:25:00). It can be consequently argued that Nick purposefully uses tentative language to ridicule Judy's aspirations as they are irrational in his opinion. Nick uses more assertive language as he addresses Judy directly and does not soften his utterances in any way. Judy also speaks to Nick in a very direct manner, however, there are more instances of boosting in Nick's sentences than in Judy's. Although this scene portrays a neutral conversation at first glance, it can be said that the way each character speaks nevertheless conveys a stereotypical idea of gender, as Nick is the more direct of the two interlocutors, which is a linguistic behaviour that is typically described as male according to Lakoff or Holmes (Lakoff 50, Holmes 195).

In the second dialogue between Nick and Judy, a shift in linguistic pattern can be observed. As Judy's intention is to apologise to Nick, she uses a substantially higher amount of hedges and more tentative language than in the first conversation. She frequently repeats herself for example and refers to herself as being "just a dumb bunny". As shown in Murphy's table, repetition and the use of the restrictive adverb *just* can be defined as forms of hedging (Murphy 48). Nick, however, does not use any tentative language throughout this dialogue but uses a negative form of assertive language to start the conversation by saying: "[...] isn't that interesting?" (Howard & Moore, 2016, 01:20:08-01:20:15). This conversation shows a common stereotype regarding the behaviour of different genders. While men are frequently described as rational, calm and reasonable an attribute that is commonly associated with women is being emotional (Eagly 16). Consequently, it can be argued that the analysed scene enforces the respective stereotypes by portraying a conversation between a male and a female character this particular way.

In a conversation between Judy and the receptionist of the police station Benjamin Clawhauser, several differences in linguistic behaviour can be observed. In the beginning of their dialogue Judy uses a stance adverb to make her statement less direct and face threatening towards her interlocuter Clawhauser. Further, Judy's voice is noteworthy in the respective scene as she speaks in a high pitch to further soften her utterance. In the following scene Judy tries to tell Clawhauser that a donut is stuck in the space between his neck and his chin, however, she takes several attempts to address it clearly enough for Clawhauser to understand. Consequently, it could be argued that this is another instance of hedging or tentative language as her intention was to render her words soft and polite. While Judy displays several instances of hedging or tentative language, Clawhauser remains neutral in his linguistic choices which further highlights the difference in their way of speaking (Howard & Moore 00:13:57-00:14:24).

It could thus be argued that the respective scene enforces the common stereotype that women are more likely to use tentative language in order to avoid being perceived as too direct or impolite. The end of Judy's and Clawhauser's interaction is marked by a statement about Judy when she does not hear him anymore. He refers to her as a poor little bunny and voices his belief that she will not stand a chance in this department. The way that Clawhauser speaks about Judy is worth investigating, as scholar such as Lakoff showed that women are often spoken about in different and less assertive terms than men, frequently having their competences questioned (Lakoff 57). Although his voice is soft and he seems to sympathise with Judy, it is

noticeable that he also pities her and her, in his opinion, mission that is set to fail, namely joining Zootropolis' police force as a bunny.

Another noteworthy interaction takes place between Judy and her supervisor Chief Bogo in his office after Judy abandoned her parking duty to chase a weasel who robbed a florist's shop. Throughout the whole interaction, the linguistic choices of Judy and Chief Bogo are of remarkable difference. While Chief Bogo predominantly uses assertive language and is very direct in talking to Judy, she employs a significantly higher amount of tentative language (Howard & Moore 00:30:57-00:33:54). Judy uses hedges to make her statements less direct, especially when contradicting Chief Bogo's claims, as for instance softening her argument in telling him that she "hate[s] to disagree, but [...]" before saying that he is wrong (Howard & Moore, 2016, 00:31:07-00:31:08). Furthermore, she uses hedges such as "well" or "kind of" to soften her utterances. Chief Bogo, however, employs mainly assertive language, as he addresses Judy and her wrongdoings directly without any face-saving measures. Bogo's use of assertive language becomes even more visible when Mrs Otterton enters his office, as towards the otter his way of speaking is more polite and less harsh than when he speaks to Judy. Chief Bogo tells Judy to "shut [her] tiny mouth, now!" while he politely asks Mrs Otterton to "please wait out here" and even opens the door for her (Howard & Moore 00:31:17-00:32:45). This change in tone of voice and linguistic choices clearly indicate that Chief Bogo perceives Judy as his subordinate and thus shows power and dominance towards her. Consequently, the way each of the two animals speaks in this interaction highlights the fact that Judy has less power and is not perceived as an equal to Chief Bogo (Howard & Moore 00:30:57-00:33:54).

Analysing an interaction between mayor Lionheart and his assistant mayor Bellwether, a similar pattern of speech as between Judy and her supervisor can be observed. The assistant mayor Bellwether addresses mayor Lionheart with Sir, she also uses several hedges, such as "could" or "just" to soften her utterances and make them less direct. Consequently it can be observed that assistant mayor Bellwether employs tentative language when speaking to her boss. The mayor, on the other hand, speaks directly to his assistant without any noticeable hedges. His style of speaking can thus be described as assertive and direct, as he speaks to his assistant mayor without any softening items to make his commands less harsh (Howard & Moore 01:00:47-01:01:08). Furthermore, after assistant mayor Bellwether drops her files, she uses a harmless expression to show her frustration instead of swearing. As shown by Lakoff (50), this could be interpreted as another instance of tentative language, however, as the film is G-rated

and thus intended for children of any age, the reason for her choice of words could be explained by this. As has been shown by Brown, Disney films are classified as family films and thus do not contain any, or very little violence and inappropriate language (Brown 13).

Having analysed several mixed gender interaction, we will now investigate the linguistic behaviour of Judy and the assistant mayor Bellwether in exclusively female conversations. In a dialogue between Judy and assistant mayor Bellwether, an interesting pattern of linguistic behaviour can be observed. While Judy remains neutral in her way of speaking and does not use any hedges or boosters, assistant mayor Bellwether speaks in tentative language throughout their conversation and uses numerous hedges, namely formulaic expression such as “you know”, “I mean” or “I think”, and stance adverbs as for example “kind of” or “actually” (Howard & Moore 01:01:36-01:01:56).

As stated by Carli (946) women are less likely to use tentative language in an interaction with other women. Assistant mayor Bellwether’s behaviour could consequently be described as atypical, however, taking into account that she is the villain of the story, I argue that her linguistic choices were purposefully made as to not attract any suspicion. To prove this claim, another conversation between Judy and the assistant mayor is analysed. This conversation takes place towards the end of the film when Bellwether shows her true face and explains to Judy why she started her agenda against predators. In her speech, she does not use any hedges or tentative language in general, but she speaks in an assertive and direct way, giving commands to her subordinates while not showing any signs of insecurity or nervousness, two characteristics that described her linguistic behaviour in previous interactions (Howard & Moore 01:29:38-01:30:20).

4.5. Speech Analysis

Scholars such as Lakoff, Holmes or Sanli have proven in their research that speech and power are indisputably interlinked. In general, it can be stated that it is often more important who the speaker is than the utterance of the speaker itself, as speaking, especially in public, carries power (Sanli 287). Consequently, this chapter will focus on the analysis of linguistic behaviour and speech patterns in the film *Zootopia*. To be precise, the use of tentative and assertive language will be investigated, with a special focus on the use of tag questions, namely whether modal or assertive tags are used, the individual speaking time in a dialogue as well as hedging

and boosting. Furthermore, emphasis will be put on the way that male animals in Disney's *Zootopia* speak about female animals of their own or other species. The intention behind the aforementioned part of the analysis is based on Carli's research outcomes which show that women use tentative speech more in interactions with men than they do in female-only conversations (Carli 946). According to other researchers, such as Fishman, linguistic behaviour and patterns of speech reflect social structures and imbalance in power (Fishman 405). Therefore, comparing the use of tentative and assertive language in mixed-gender interactions in *Zootopia* helps to identify patterns of speech and uncover gender asymmetries in the film.

To make the analysis easier to follow, it is important to mention that the basic concept of the relationship of language and gender introduced by Robin Lakoff will be used, however, with significant adaptations. First of all, the labels tentative and assertive language will be used in order to identify different linguistic behaviours. Furthermore, following Holmes' argumentation, the influence of other factors than gender, namely species and social status will be taken into account in order to obtain a more representative outcome (Holmes 217). Lastly, it has to be mentioned that the outcomes of this analysis do not automatically establish a link between a feature of language, such as a tag and a specific characteristic as lacking confidence for example. The intention of this analysis is to identify patterns of speech and analyse whether there is a difference in linguistic behaviour between male and female characters in the film. Additionally, this speech analysis wants to investigate how far the representation between male and female animals differs on a linguistic level and which type of speech is used more frequently by whom. The overall goal is to identify the purpose of individual linguistic items in order to understand whether specific stereotypes are reinforced through a character's way of speaking and how characters are spoken about or not.

It has been addressed by scholars such as Janet Holmes that in a conversational context it is more important who speaks than what is being said (Holmes 203). Holmes explains this phenomenon by arguing that men generally take up more speaking time in a conversation and address the receiver more directly than women do. As men frequently obtain positions of power, they feel less inclined to exert their right to speak, contrary to the common stereotype that women speak more than men (Holmes 203). Consequently, the first part of the speech analysis will focus on the amount of time that each animal taking part in a conversation or a dialogue takes up speaking. Another factor that will be addressed when analysing each animal's speaking

time is who started and ended a conversation. According to Wilkinson & Kitzinger (556), taking turns in a conversation and directing it can be seen as an exercise of power. Consequently, I would argue that the intentions of a character starting or ending a conversation are worth investigating as they provide insights into the distribution of power amongst interlocutors (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 556).

Taking a conversation between the female lead character Judy Hopps and the higher-ranking police officer Chief Bogo for example, it can be observed that despite Judy being the one who initiated the conversation in order to address a remark on her assignment, Chief Bogo ends the conversation by simply leaving the room (Howard & Moore 00:16:10-00:16:29). The Chief's behaviour clearly demonstrates that he has more power in the conversation than Judy, as he ends the conversation and thus dismisses Judy's request by leaving the room and turning his back on her (Howard & Moore 00:16:10-00:16:30). In this concrete example of a mixed gender conversation, several other factors have to be taken into account in order to thoroughly understand the distribution of power between the two animals. First of all, it has to be considered that Chief Bogo is the lead of Judy's team and thus has more authority than Judy, not only being a police officer under his command but being the newest member of the team. Furthermore, Chief Bogo's decision to assign parking duty to Judy despite her outstanding qualifications displays how he thinks of her. Consequently, I would argue that although Judy occupies more speaking time in the dialogue, with a total of 16 seconds compared to Chief Bogo's 4 seconds of speaking, Chief Bogo remains the more dominant entity, as his attitude towards Judy demonstrates that he does not consider this conversation worth his time (Howard & Moore 00:16:09-00:16:30). Consequently, I believe that not only the time of speaking but the intent of the conversation, as well as its formal setting is relevant to determine who maintains more power. Additionally, the tone of voice and manner of speaking is an influential aspect to take into account. To be precise analysing whether utterances are made calmly or agitatedly, loudly or silently impacts the way a statement and a speaker is perceived. As stated by Eagly female characters are frequently said to be more emotional than male characters which will become evident in the following examples (Eagly 16).

Looking at another conversation between Judy and Chief Bogo, all of the aforementioned factors can be seen in use. First of all, Chief Bogo initiates the conversation with a sarcastic statement and put Judy in a position to explain herself. After she does so, in a way that can be described as nervous and agitated, Chief Bogo angrily tells Judy that she has to quit, according

to the deal he made with her. Judy still trying to explain what she saw, is repeatedly interrupted by Chief Bogo who does not care to listen to her (Howard & Moore 00:55:41-00:55:45). In this particular conversation, Chief Bogo takes up more speaking time, with a total of 22 seconds, compared to Judy who only spoke 17 seconds. What is even more striking is the flow of the conversation. While Judy tries to explain herself in order to make Chief Bogo believe her throughout the whole dialogue and thus putting herself in a defensive, less powerful position, the Chief openly voices his disbelief and interrupts Judy's utterances multiple times. Following the arguments made by Wilkinson & Kitzinger (560), Chief Bogo repeatedly interrupting Judy can be interpreted as male dominance and a sign of power. While interrupting the other speaker might happen by mistake, this scene clearly shows that Chief Bogo purposefully interrupts Judy as he disregards turn-taking rules which can thus be interpreted as a hostile interruption (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 560).

The first lengthy conversation between Judy and Nick provides another example of the distribution of speaking time and how it mirrors the imbalance of power between the two speakers. In this dialogue, Judy accuses Nick of being insincere and pursuing illegitimate business. Analysing the amount of time each speaker uses to speak throughout the conversation demonstrates that Nick takes up most of the speaking time, as he talks for 68 seconds in total, while Judy only contributes for a total of 19 seconds. Furthermore, the way each of them speaks is a relevant point for this investigation, as Nick uses belittling terms to speak about Judy in several instances, such as "sweetheart", "Carrots", "naïve little hick", "whoopsie number three-sie", "cute, fuzzy wuzzy little tail" (Howard & Moore 00:23:42-00:25:13). Those terms and the condescending way he speaks to and about Judy illustrate that he does not take her seriously and he is in no way intimidated by her, thus also not acknowledging her authority as a police officer. Judy, on the other hand, seems to be disappointed by Nick's behaviour, which she emphasises by saying that she stood up for him and his alleged son and he lied to her. The behaviour observed in this scene has been described by Seybold as an instance of gender asymmetry and the stereotypical portrayal of Judy as a female character (Seybold 80). This statement being her first utterance highlights that she is portrayed as more emotional as well as the fact that she called Nick a liar rather than a criminal (Howard & Moore 00:23:42-00:23:50). Another aspect that contributes to the impression of Nick being the one in power within the conversation is the way the interaction takes place. While Judy confronts Nick about what he did, he simply turns his back on Judy and walks away, thus literally taking the lead in this interaction. Judy continues to chase him throughout the conversation, and although Nick does

not run from Judy, he physically and conversationally creates distance between them. To conclude their conversation, Judy is stuck in wet cement and Nick literally looks down on her, which emphasises the image created throughout their dialogue (Howard & Moore 00:23:42-00:25:23).

To further investigate the relationship between language and gender, several mixed-gender interactions between Judy and Nick Wilde, the two lead characters, a conversation between Judy and the receptionist Benjamin Clawhauser as well as between Judy and her supervisor Chief Bogo, and conversations between mayor Lionheart and assistant mayor Bellwether will be analysed. While the interaction between Judy and Nick and Judy and Benjamin show two equals regarding their level of authority, both the interactions between Judy and Chief Bogo, as well as the dialogues between assistant mayor Bellwether and mayor Lionheart provide examples of interactions between representatives of two different levels of authority and influence. Additionally, interactions between Judy and assistant mayor Bellwether will be examined to compare the use of tentative and assertive language in mixed-gender conversations to the respective use in exclusively female conversations. To facilitate comparison, the categories of hedges and boosters, as well as some of their sub-categories, and the precise division of tags, namely modal tags, facilitative tags, and softening tags will be used.

Comparing two interactions between the main characters Nick Wilde and Judy Hopps using the analytical tools mentioned above, it becomes evident that tentative and assertive language are not used equally between the two characters. While the first conversation that is investigated is the initial dialogue Judy and Nick have, the second interaction that is analysed takes place towards the end of the film when Judy apologises to Nick. Both conversations show different patterns of speech and differ from each other substantially. In the first interaction, a small amount of both tentative and assertive language is used and the conversation can be described as neutral in terms of linguistic choices. Interestingly, the only instance of hedging in the conversation comes from Nick, however, only in the context of talking about Judy and her dreams of becoming a real police officer in Zootropolis (Howard & Moore 00:23:00-00:25:00). It can be consequently argued that Nick purposefully uses tentative language to ridicule Judy's aspirations as they are irrational in his opinion. Nick uses more assertive language as he addresses Judy directly and does not soften his utterances in any way. Judy also speaks to Nick in a very direct manner, however, there are more instances of boosting in Nick's sentences than in Judy's. Although this scene portrays a neutral conversation at first glance, it can be said that

the way each character speaks nevertheless conveys a stereotypical idea of gender, as Nick is the more direct of the two interlocutors, which is a linguistic behaviour that is typically described as male according to Lakoff or Holmes (Lakoff 50, Holmes 195).

In the second dialogue between Nick and Judy, a shift in the linguistic pattern can be observed. As Judy's intention is to apologise to Nick, she uses a substantially higher amount of hedges and more tentative language than in the first analysed conversation. She frequently repeats herself for example and refers to herself as being "just a dumb bunny". As shown in Murphy's table, repetition and the use of the restrictive adverb *just* can be defined as forms of hedging (Murphy 48). Nick, however, does not use any tentative language throughout this dialogue but uses a negative form of assertive language to start the conversation by saying: "[...] isn't that interesting?" (Howard & Moore 01:20:08-01:20:15). This conversation shows a common stereotype regarding the behaviour of different genders. While men are frequently described as rational, calm and reasonable an attribute that is commonly associated with women is being emotional (Eagly 16). Consequently, it can be argued that the analysed scene enforces the respective stereotype by portraying a conversation between a male and a female character in this particular way.

In a conversation between Judy and the receptionist of the police station Benjamin Clawhauser, differences in linguistic behaviour can be observed. At the beginning of their dialogue, Judy uses a stance adverb to make her statement less direct and face threatening towards her interlocutor Clawhauser. Further, Judy's voice is noteworthy in the respective scene as she speaks in a high pitch to further soften her utterance. In the following scene, Judy tries to tell Clawhauser that a doughnut is stuck in the space between his neck and his chin, however, she takes several attempts to address it clearly enough for Clawhauser to understand. Consequently, it could be argued that this is another instance of hedging or tentative language as her intention was to render her words soft and polite. While Judy displays several instances of hedging or tentative language, Clawhauser remains neutral in his linguistic choices which further highlights the difference in their way of speaking (Howard & Moore 00:13:57-00:14:24).

It could thus be argued that the respective scene enforces the common stereotype that women are more likely to use tentative language in order to avoid being perceived as too direct or impolite. The end of Judy's and Clawhauser's interaction is marked by a statement about Judy when she does not hear him anymore. He refers to her as a poor little bunny and voices his belief that she will not stand a chance in this department. The way that Clawhauser speaks about

Judy is worth investigating, as scholars such as Lakoff showed that women are often spoken about in different and less assertive terms than men, frequently having their competencies questioned (Lakoff 57). Although his voice is soft and he seems to sympathise with Judy, it is noticeable that he also pities her and her mission that is set to fail in his opinion, namely joining Zootropolis' police force as a bunny.

Another noteworthy interaction takes place between Judy and her supervisor Chief Bogo in his office after Judy abandoned her parking duty to chase a weasel who robbed a florist's shop. Throughout the whole interaction, the linguistic choices of Judy and Chief Bogo are of remarkable difference. While Chief Bogo predominantly uses assertive language and is very direct in talking to Judy, she employs a significantly higher amount of tentative language (Howard & Moore 00:30:57-00:33:54). Judy uses hedges to make her statements less direct, especially when contradicting Chief Bogo's claims, as for instance softening her argument in telling him that she "hate[s] to disagree, but [...]" before saying that he is wrong (Howard & Moore 00:31:07-00:31:08). Furthermore, she uses hedges such as "well" or "kind of" to soften her utterances. Chief Bogo, however, employs mainly assertive language, as he addresses Judy and her wrongdoings directly without any face-saving measures. Bogo's use of assertive language becomes even more visible when Mrs Otterton enters his office, as towards the otter his way of speaking is more polite and less harsh than when he speaks to Judy. Chief Bogo tells Judy to "shut [her] tiny mouth, now!" while he politely asks Mrs Otterton to "please wait out here" and even opens the door for her (Howard & Moore, 2016, 00:31:17-00:32:45). This change in tone of voice and linguistic choices clearly indicate that Chief Bogo perceives Judy as his subordinate and thus shows power and dominance towards her. Consequently, the way each of the two animals speaks in this interaction highlights the fact that Judy has less power and is not perceived as an equal to Chief Bogo (Howard & Moore 00:30:57-00:33:54).

Analysing an interaction between mayor Lionheart and his assistant mayor Bellwether, a similar pattern of speech to Judy and her supervisor can be observed. The assistant mayor Bellwether addresses mayor Lionheart with Sir, she also uses several hedges, such as "could" or "just" to soften her utterances and make them less direct. Consequently, it can be observed that assistant mayor Bellwether employs tentative language when speaking to her supervisor. The mayor, on the other hand, speaks directly to his assistant without any noticeable hedges. His style of speaking can thus be described as assertive and direct, as he speaks to his assistant mayor without any softening items to make his commands less harsh (Howard & Moore 01:00:47-

01:01:08). Furthermore, after assistant mayor Bellwether drops her files, she uses a harmless expression to show her frustration instead of swearing. As shown by Lakoff, this could be interpreted as another instance of tentative language (Lakoff 50). However, as the film is PG-rated and thus intended for children of almost any age, the reason for Bellwether's choice of wording could be explained by this. As has been shown by Brown, Disney films are classified as family films and thus do not contain any, or very little violence and inappropriate language (Brown 13).

Having analysed several mixed-gender interactions, we will now investigate the linguistic behaviour of Judy and the assistant mayor Bellwether in exclusively female conversations. In a dialogue between Judy and assistant mayor Bellwether, an interesting pattern of linguistic behaviour can be observed. While Judy remains neutral in her way of speaking and does not use any hedges or boosters, assistant mayor Bellwether speaks in tentative language throughout their conversation and uses numerous hedges, namely formulaic expressions such as "you know", "I mean" or "I think", and stance adverbs as for example "kind of" or "actually" (Howard & Moore 01:01:36-01:01:56). As stated by Carli (946) women are less likely to use tentative language in an interaction with other women. Assistant mayor Bellwether's behaviour could consequently be described as atypical, however, taking into account that she is the villain of the story, I argue that her linguistic choices were purposefully made so as to not attract any suspicion. To prove this claim, another conversation between Judy and the assistant mayor is analysed. This conversation takes place towards the end of the film when Bellwether shows her true face and explains to Judy why she started her agenda against predators. In her speech, Bellwether does not use any hedges or tentative language in general, but she speaks in an assertive and direct way, giving commands to her subordinates while not showing any signs of insecurity or nervousness, two characteristics that described her linguistic behaviour in previous interactions (Howard & Moore 01:29:38-01:30:20).

4.6. Mise en Scène

The following chapter will investigate how *mise en scène* has been employed by the producers of Disney's *Zootopia* to convey ideas of power, dominance and emotions in relation to the characters in the film. The different aspects of framing will be looked at closely and the concepts of dominant contrast, intrinsic interest and camera position will be investigated (Giannetti 54-56).

Analysing an interaction between the female lead character Judy Hopps and the male lead character Nick Wilde, it becomes evident, that the aforementioned tools have been employed purposefully to contribute to the story told on screen. Judy, as well as Nick, appear in the centre of the frame at the beginning of the scene, which suggests that both characters are important for the story and the upcoming scenes. As the camera zooms in on the two characters, however, Nick occupies more space within the frame due to his size and is also positioned towards the top of the frame while Judy occupies the bottom. As convincingly stated by Giannetti, characters that appear on top of the frame suggest dominance and power, while everything that is shown at the bottom appears to be more vulnerable and weak (Giannetti 54).

As regards the composition of the scene, Judy is often put slightly behind Nick, which contributes to the idea of him being the leading force in their relationship and her being of less importance, as she follows his lead. Furthermore, because Judy continues to pursue Nick he becomes the figure of intrinsic interest in the scene, as the camera, as well as the spectator's eye, tracks him which further emphasises Nick's dominant role in the relationship (Giannetti 55). When crossing the street, Nick and Judy have to pass a flock of sheep, which walk on their back legs and are thus very tall. While Nick smoothly walks through them and maintains a significant amount of space within the frame, Judy has to squeeze through the herd in order to keep up with Nick, which makes her shot appear to be more cramped (Howard & Moore 00:24:06-00:25:00). As stated by Giannetti, a loosely framed shot, such as Nick's part of the scene suggests freedom while a tightly framed shot as in Judy's case, conveys the idea of being trapped (Giannetti 56). Towards the end of the scene, which also marks a turning point in Nick and Judy's lengthy conversation, the camera zooms in further which results in Nick fully occupying the centre of the frame and Judy residing on the left side of the composition. As argued by Giannetti, objects that are put on either side of the frame frequently indicate a lack of significance (Giannetti 55). It can thus be argued, that the mise en scène in the respective scene contributes to the idea of Judy not only being less powerful than the male lead character but also of less significance in general. When Judy confronts Nick about the claims he made about her, an interesting switch in composition can be noticed. Judy surpasses Nick and forces him to stop, which makes her occupy more space within the frame and puts her back in the middle of the composition. However, when Nick tells her that she is indeed nothing but a dumb bunny the camera zooms out to show that Judy is stuck in wet cement, which also makes Nick appear on top of the screen again compared to Judy who is now located at the bottom (00:24:00-00:25:54).

Taking a look at an interaction between assistant mayor Bellwether and mayor Lionheart, the imbalance of power between male and female characters that prevails throughout the movie is highlighted by the application of *mise en scène*. As the camera zooms in on the mayor of Zootropolis giving a speech, one can immediately see that he takes up the majority of space within the frame and is placed right in its middle. His assistant mayor, however, only occupies a small portion of the bottom of the frame, so she can barely be seen and is easily overlooked. The positioning of assistant mayor Bellwether within the frame and in comparison to mayor Lionheart underlines how little power and significance the assistant mayor has compared to her supervisor (Howard & Moore 00:07:17-00:07:22). In the following scene, Judy enters the stage so she appears next to assistant mayor Bellwether and mayor Lionheart. Although the two female herbivores outnumber the mayor, he still takes up the majority of space on the frame and has more compositional weight than Judy and Bellwether combined. Further, the mayor represents the dominant contrast in this show, immediately attracting the viewer's eye as he significantly differs in size (Giannetti 61).

When only Judy and the assistant mayor show within the frame, it can be observed that Judy is portrayed in full front, which engages the audience to sympathise with her, which is the main purpose of this camera angle, as argued by Giannetti (77). The assistant mayor Bellwether on the other hand has most of her face turned away from the camera, a style of filming that is called the three-quarter turn and which is used to create a sense of mystery or antipathy (Giannetti 77). Although a celebratory scene is described here, it can be argued that the angles in which both animals are shot suggest which character the audience will continue to identify with and which one will be the villain of the story. Furthermore, the assistant mayor is positioned towards the edge of the frame, while Judy occupies the centre part, which also suggests that Judy's character is more important than Bellwether's (Howard & Moore 00:07:20-00:08:02). As stated by Giannetti portraying a character on the edge of the screen, the composition indicates that the character is unknown or lacks importance (Giannetti 55).

A conversation between Judy and Chief Bogo in his office provides another noteworthy example of how *mise en scène* can be used to convey ideas of authority and the distribution of power. Chief Bogo being a bison naturally takes up more space in a room than Judy does. However, how he is positioned within the frame further emphasises the imbalance of size between them, which can be seen as a reference to an imbalance of power. While Chief Bogo has more compositional weight than Judy, as his side of the frame appears to be heavier than

Judy's, the shot is narrowly framed which makes the amount of space occupied by the chief even bigger. The imbalance of visual space remains present throughout the scene, especially when the camera zooms in on the two animals. Chief Bogo occupies the majority of space on the screen and in particular, is placed towards the top end of the frame. This composition underlines his position of dominance and power and emphasises the fact that Judy is subordinate to him. As the scene progresses, Chief Bogo continues to occupy even more space within the frame, consequently also invading Judy's space and forcing her to move backwards towards the edge of the screen. As argued by Gibbs, how much personal space a character has in a filmic composition or the lack thereof indicates how much power the respective character has in relation to the other character. Usually, the one invading personal space and thus taking it away from his interlocutor is the dominant and more powerful character in a relationship (Gibbs 24). Consequently, Chief Bogo's behaviour towards Judy as well as his position in the frame strongly suggest gender asymmetry in terms of power and authority (Howard & Moore 00:30:57-00:31:18).

Another interaction between Judy and Chief Bogo provides further examples to support the claim made above. The analysed scene represents the first conversation between Judy and her supervisor. The very first shot of the dialogue between Judy and Chief Bogo shows Judy in full front and Chief Bogo in a three-quarter turn, facing Judy and turning his back to the camera. While Judy can be seen as a whole, Chief Bogo's shoulder and a small portion of his face are the only visible parts of him on screen. The camera is facing Judy from Chief Bogo's perspective, creating a view from above, which emphasises Judy's small body size. In the next scene, both Judy and Chief Bogo appear fully on screen, in the centre of the frame. This scene also shows parts of the room the Chief and Judy are in and it becomes evident that the police station, similar to the room shown in this scene, is not made for animals of Judy's size. While Chief Bogo would be able to reach every item in the room with ease, Judy is too small to reach the coffee machine or sit comfortably at the table. Thus, this shot can be interpreted as underlining the hardships that Judy and other animals of her size face in an environment designed for big animals (Howard & Moore 00:16:13-00:16:20).

The camera perspective varies between Judy and Chief Bogo, which further emphasises the difference in size between the two animals. While Chief Bogo is depicted in a narrowly framed shot, displaying only his upper body, occupying half of the screen, Judy can almost be seen in full, however, she still merely occupies one-fourth of the screen. These framing techniques not

only highlight the physical differences between the two animals but also underline the different levels of power each of them has. While Chief Bogo looks down on Judy and occupies the upper part of the frame in shots where both animals are depicted, Judy is positioned on the lower end of the frame, indicating that Chief Bogo has more authority and power than her (Howard & Moore 00:16:13-00:16:25).

To contrast the unequal relationship of authority and power between Judy and Chief Bogo, an interaction between Judy and the cheetah Benjamin Clawhauser will be discussed. As neither of the two characters inherently holds more power or authority than the other, this duo creates a valuable contrast to the conversation analysed before.

In the first seconds of Judy's and Clawhauser's interaction, it is not possible to see Judy as she is too small to fit in the frame. Merely the tips of her ears show and only when Clawhauser bends over his desk, the camera zooms out far enough to show both characters. While Clawhauser occupies the top part of the screen, Judy is once again positioned at the bottom. As stated before, according to Giannetti the top of the frame indicates a position of power and importance while the bottom implies insignificance and a lack of power (Giannetti 54). As the shot is narrowly framed, neither Clawhauser nor Judy fully show on the screen. However, it can be argued that Clawhauser is given more importance by how the scene is composed, as his desk with his name tag, as well as his snacks and decorations are shown, which allocates the majority of visual space to him and his belongings (Howard & Moore 00:13:57-00:14:23). Towards the end of their interaction, Judy leaves Clawhauser behind to join the other new police officers. However, the camera does not follow Judy but remains focused on Clawhauser to record his reaction to Judy's ambition to be Zootopia's first rabbit police officer. It could consequently be argued that this composition stresses the importance of one character over the other. This impression is further highlighted in the next scene where the camera swings to Judy who is shown in a loosely framed shot, underlining the difference between her and the other animals in the police force which are significantly taller and bigger than her. In this shot, Judy is portrayed in the middle of an elephant, two polar bears, a lion, two hippos and a rhinoceros making her appear even smaller (Howard & Moore 00:14:25-00:14:29).

Consequently, it can be argued that the cinematic techniques employed in the analysed scenes emphasise the lack of power and importance other characters allocate to Judy. Although Judy is undoubtedly the female hero of the story, the framing and positioning of characters within the frame continue to highlight that there is always a male counterpart who is as important for

the story as she is, if not more. It can thus be argued that the tools used in mise en scène reinforce the gender asymmetry that the earlier analysis of the film has shown.

4.7. Cultural Connotations

The movie Zootopia not only represents different species of animals but also portrays different cultures. While this might not be evident at first glance, Disney adapts the respective film so to better suit different cultures and their local animals. To be precise while the main characters remain the same in each broadcasting country, one character changes according to the region the film is shown in. It could be assumed that the producers of this Disney film deliberately only exchanged a supporting role in the film to subtly make Zootopia more appealing for each respective target audience while maintaining the well-known main characters.

The character that is exchanged according to location is the news reporter that is shown on Zootopian TV. While the United States of America, as well as Canada and France, are shown an elk, spectators in Japan see a tanuki as the Zootopia news reporter. Australia as well as New Zealand have a koala bear delivering the news to the citizens of Zootopia whereas Brazilian spectators see a jaguar when watching the film (Libbey 2022). Viewers from China are presented a panda bear as a news reporter and people in the UK see a corgi (Song 4). The following picture illustrates the news reporter that is shown in different broadcasting countries, portraying the characters used in France and Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand as well as China:



Image 4: News Reporters in Zootopia

While it can be assumed that Disney changed the animals that represent the news reporters as typical animals according to their broadcasting country in order to make it more appealing for the target audience, it is worthwhile investigating the cultural connotations of the animals that remain unchanged in every country. Although individual stereotypes vary according to the cultural context, people undoubtedly tend to associate specific stereotypes with individual groups of animals. As summarised by Sevillano & Fiske, allocating a certain character trait to an animal because of its species can be referred to as social categorisation (Sevillano & Fiske 2009). According to Sevillano & Fiske, the act of social categorisation can be described as allocating certain character traits to a group of people, or animals, without knowing the individual, but based on knowledge gathered from other members of the same group (Sevillano & Fiske 2009).

Taking the male lead character Nick Wilde the fox as an example, it can be said that in the cultural space of the West foxes are commonly associated with the attributes cunning, sly or deceitful. This connotation thus matches his role in the film well. It can be assumed that the producers of the film are aware of those typical connotations, as Nick even describes himself as sly in one scene of the film (Howard & Moore 00:25:40-00:25:41). Taking a closer look at the cultural space of the East, however, the choice of animal is not as fitting everywhere. According to Yu, foxes have a similar connotation in China for instance, but their symbolic meaning in Japan differs substantially. In Japanese culture, foxes are perceived as a symbol of fertility, a character trait which is commonly associated with women and a quality that the animated fox in Zootopia does not embody (Yu 837).

Another example of a difference in connotation between Eastern and Western culture would be the lion, which is also an animal represented in the movie, as the mayor of the city Zootropolis is an animated lion named Lionheart. Following Yu, the lion is seen as the king of animals in Western cultures, and thus the role of the lion shown in Zootopia being the mayor and leading the city is in synergy with the respective cultural connotation. As Yu states, however, in Eastern countries, the tiger is seen as the king of all animals and is attributed the same characteristics that Westerners associate with lions (Yu 837). Consequently, the most fitting animal to represent and lead the city of Zootropolis in an Eastern context would be a tiger instead of mayor Lionheart.

Analysing Judy Hopps and her family, some typical western-centric stereotypes of rabbits can be observed. First of all, Judy has more than 200 siblings which implies that rabbits reproduce fast and often. This stereotype is further highlighted in one of the initial scenes of the film, namely when Judy leaves her hometown Bunnyburrow to join the police in Zootropolis. As the train leaves Bunnyburrow a sign appears on screen, wishing travellers farewell and showing the current population of the town. Within a matter of seconds, the population rises from 81435798 to 81435820 highlighting the high reproduction rate of the city (Howard & Moore 00:09:55-00:10:03). Furthermore, all of Judy's relatives, including her parents, are carrot farmers which indicates that they like growing and eating carrots (Howard & Moore 00:03:54-00:04:01). As summarised by Sevillano & Fiske rabbits are frequently categorised as farm animals and thus perceived as less intelligent than other species or groups of animals (Sevillano & Fiske 210). This stereotype is depicted in the film, as several animals do not take Judy seriously and do not think her capable of becoming a police officer (Howard & Moore 2016). The male lead character Nick Wilde, for instance directly confronts Judy with her origins and tells her that every animal is defined by its species and cannot reach goals that are above the respective species' capabilities (Howard & Moore 00:25:35-00:25:45). Concretely, he refers to her as a dumb bunny, which mirrors the common association addressed by Sevillano & Fiske of rabbits having little cognitive ability (Sevillano & Fiske 210).

In an Eastern context, the rabbit is frequently perceived as a symbol of courage, strength and longevity as well as fertility (Kim 74). While the first stereotypical character traits in Eastern culture are not shown in the film *Zootopia*, as Judy's skills and qualifications are frequently questioned, the belief of rabbits being a symbol of fertility is depicted in the movie, as Judy herself states that her species is good at multiplying (Howard & Moore 00:35:59-00:36:00).

5. Discussion

The following chapter addresses the insights gained during the analysis of specific scenes in the film *Zootopia* employing different analytical tools and methods. As the first chapter of the analysis shows, the animals in the film *Zootopia* are heavily anthropomorphised. Most of the featured animals walk upright, wear clothes and possess other items that are common in the human world, such as phones or cars (Howard & Moore 2016). Consequently, the end to which anthropomorphism is used in the film is worth discussing.

The analysis of the aspects of anthropomorphism shown in the movie highlights the stereotypical portrayal of men and women, which can be considered the first reason for anthropomorphising animals. While the male characters in the film wear loose clothing, female characters wear clothes that accentuate their body and frequently also clothe in skirts or dresses (Howard & Moore 2016). Comparing the uniform of Judy and her colleagues, this difference becomes even more evident, as her uniform is tight and underlines the shape of her body as well as the female features she displays, while her colleagues wear standard police uniforms (Howard & Moore 00:16:14-00:16:15). Consequently, it can be concluded that the film enhances the stereotypical representation of male and female bodies through the use of anthropomorphism.

Another end to which anthropomorphism is used is to portray issues common in human society. The story of the animals living in Zootopia addresses numerous problems that can also be observed in human society. At first glance, all animals appear to coexist in peace, however, taking a closer look it becomes evident that stereotypes and prejudice dictate the lives of the animals living in the city of Zootopia. Most herbivore animals fight to be taken seriously by predators, as they are commonly smaller in size and weaker than the predators and thus, it is the latter species that occupies positions of power and influence (Howard & Moore 2016). The predators living in Zootropolis, however, are often faced with prey being suspicious about them and their intentions. Most herbivores do not fully trust the animals of the predator species, as numerous examples throughout the film have shown (Howard & Moore 2016). One scene in the film noticeably emphasises the division of predators and prey underlying their superficially peaceful coexistence. When Nick Wilde and his alleged son enter an ice cream parlour for elephants, they are denied service and asked to leave the premises, merely for being foxes (Howard & Moore 00:19:30-00:19:40). Consequently, it can be argued that through the use of anthropomorphism the film Zootopia negotiates issues that prevail in human society, such as negative stereotypes about specific groups of people or mistrusting people due to their origin or ethnicity.

An issue that is also displayed throughout the film is the fundamental gender asymmetry between male and female characters. Addressing the previously mentioned example of the interaction between Nick Wilde and the elephant in the ice cream parlour, it becomes obvious that some male animals, regardless of their species, do not take female animals seriously. Although Judy is a police officer and thus in a position of authority and she and the elephant

are both herbivores, the elephant does not take Judy seriously, as becomes evident by analysing his behaviour towards her. Subsequently, it can be assumed that the elephant's attitude towards Judy does not result from her species but her gender (Howard & Moore 00:19:30-00:19:40).

The speech analysis that has been conducted for multiple scenes supports the claims made above, namely that there is a significant difference in power and authority between male and female animals. Generally, male animals are portrayed as more independent, stronger and more influential than females. Taking the example of the assistant mayor Bellwether, who is the villain of the story, the stereotypical perception of gender roles is highlighted further. Assistant mayor Bellwether, being a female sheep, has to become evil in order to obtain power, displaying what has been convincingly argued by Thornham, namely that women have to lose stereotypically female character traits such as kindness in order to reach a position of power (Thornham 69).

Furthermore, it can be concluded that the female animals in Zootopia have less agency than their male counterparts. Following the definition of Dumitru, agency can be described as being able to work towards individual goals or follow personal values (Dumitru 94). It consequently includes responsibility for oneself and one's aims. Numerous scenes in the film show that female animals are inherently of less power and influence than male animals and they need to invest significantly more effort in order to achieve a specific goal. Taking Judy the female main character as an example, it can be observed that she is dependent on the help of the male lead character Nick Wilde to solve the case of the missing mammals in Zootopia. This dependence highlights a common prejudice about women addressed by Thornham, namely that they need male support in order to succeed (Thornham 24). Furthermore, Judy is initially not able to pursue her goal of becoming a genuine police officer, as her supervisor prevents her from joining the police force and assigns parking duty to her, clearly showing that he does not want her in his unit and he does not take her as capable of being a police officer (Howard & Moore 00:16:00-00:16:30). The male lead character Nick Wilde, on the other side, has more agency than Judy, as he is able to freely decide how he wants to lead his life and how he wants to earn a living. Nick is nevertheless influenced and limited by certain stereotypes that other animals hold against him and his species, however, the stereotypes are not connected to his gender (Howard & Moore 2016).

The mayor of Zootropolis and his assistant mayor can be taken as another example of gender asymmetry and the stereotypical distribution of gender roles. Mayor Lionheart has significantly more power and influence than his vice mayor and thus more agency, as he is able to decide for himself as well as for his assistant. The latter becomes visible when the mayor gives commands to his assistant without taking her perspective or well-being into account. The assistant mayor Bellwether, on the other hand, lacks agency in her role as a vice mayor as she is only able to follow the mayor's command. However, in her role as the villain of the story, she is able to exert more agency, as she leads the secret operation against predators and is thus in command. This aligns with Seybold's argument that female leadership indicates a negative change in the natural order (Seybold 72). Accordingly, it can be said that male characters commonly have more agency throughout the entire movie than female characters, regardless of their species or role in the film.

As the analysis of the film has shown, a clear difference between male and female animals can be observed in terms of power and agency. Additionally, the investigation highlighted that female characters are commonly portrayed by small, harmless animals such as sheep or rabbits, while male characters are frequently represented by strong, dangerous or big animals, such as foxes, lions or polar bears. It can be thus argued that anthropomorphism has been employed to not only highlight the difference in authority and influence between male and female characters but also to show the difference in their physique. As stated by Eagly, men are frequently associated with attributes such as independence or dominance, which are characteristics commonly connected with power and authority, while women are commonly described using adjectives such as kind, or selfless, which are traits that usually indicate a lack of power or authority (Eagly 16). This distinction is thus clearly emphasised in the film by the choice of animals and their respective gender.

The conducted speech analysis further emphasises the division between male and female characters and the imbalance of power between them. Female characters show more instances of tentative language than male characters in mixed-gender interactions, especially when it is an emotional conversation. This consequently supports the research done by Lakoff, Holmes, or Carli, namely that women tend to speak more tentatively and use fewer boosters in mixed-gender interactions than men (Lakoff 45, Holmes 73, Carli 946).

The speech analysis has shown that several factors influence how power and language are connected. First, it is important to analyse the flow of a conversation, for example, who initiates and who ends it. In the analysed scenes in *Zootopia*, it becomes evident that the person who ends the conversation commonly obtains more power, as they decide when the interaction is finished and they sometimes do so very abruptly. In the majority of the analysed interactions, it was the male character who ended a conversation, regardless of who initiated it, which further enhances the privileged position of male animals in the film. Furthermore, it can be seen that how someone is spoken about carries significant meaning. In the analysed conversations, the female characters are often spoken about in belittling terms by their male interlocutors, indicating that they are not taken seriously. This observation supports Lakoff's claim that men and women are spoken about differently, often to the disadvantage of women (Lakoff 57).

As regards the insights gained from analysing to which end *mise en scène* is employed in the film, the aforementioned observations, namely that men are portrayed as stronger, more influential and more powerful than women are confirmed. In terms of framing, the male characters commonly occupy the centre or upper part of the frame which is associated with the importance and dominance of a respective character according to Giannetti (54). The female characters also frequently occupy the centre of the frame, however, when shot with a male character, they are mainly positioned towards the bottom. Due to their smaller body size and the way the scene is framed, the female characters occupy less space, which also indicates less importance and power as stated by Giannetti (54).

Finally, an analysis of the cultural connotations in each broadcasting area revealed that the film is mainly tailored to suit a Western audience, as the stereotypes that are associated with certain animals are common in Western culture, but sometimes significantly differ in an Eastern culture. Taking the male lead character Nick Wilde as an example, it can be seen that foxes are commonly described as cunning or sly in a western context, which matches his portrayal in the film. In Eastern countries, such as Japan, however, foxes represent fertility and embody stereotypically female connotations (Yu 837). The same can be said about the rabbit Judy Hopps, as her representation fits the common connotations of rabbits in the Western world, according to Sevillano & Fiske (210). As stated before, however, some common associations with a rabbit in the Eastern world differ from what is portrayed in the film, as rabbits represent strength in many Asian countries, while Judy is often called a "cute little bunny" in the film, implying that she is not perceived as strong or powerful (Howard & Moore 2016).

Having conducted a thorough analysis of the aforementioned aspects, I argue that the species representing minorities in human society are predators. Predators are continuously met with negative stereotypes towards their species and are frequently mistrusted due to their origin. Comparing this insight to the literature review, my claim is supported by the research of Chew who came to the same conclusion (Chew 573). Further, I would argue that the herbivores who are frequently shown in the film represent a gender rather than a species. Analysing the way these animals are portrayed, illustrated and framed they mostly represent a stereotypically female gender role. Additionally, the conducted speech analysis as well as the fact that most herbivores in the film are female sustain this argument.

6. Conclusion

The objective of this master's thesis has been to analyse to which end anthropomorphism is employed in the Disney film *Zootopia* and how gender roles are portrayed. Furthermore, the analysis attempted to exhibit whether social and gender stereotypes common in a human context are depicted in the movie.

In conclusion, the literature review as well as the analysis conducted in this thesis have shown that stereotypical representation of gender prevails in children's entertainment as well as in society. The use of anthropomorphism in the film *Zootopia* has highlighted several aspects of gender and social stereotypes, namely discrimination, othering and an imbalance of power to the advantage of men.

Analysing the different features of anthropomorphism in the film, it became visible that animals are depicted according to the stereotypical image of the respective human gender. While male animals are represented as muscular, strong and big, female animals are shown as small and thin, even portraying them with stereotypically female curves. Furthermore, the choice of clothing highlights the stereotypical gender roles depicted in the film, as female characters frequently wear skirts, dresses or tight clothing, while male animals dress in pants and loosely fitted clothing.

The stereotypes that became visible in the film *Zootopia* mirror common stereotypes in human society, as animals are judged according to their species rather than their personality and prejudice guides the behaviour of many inhabitants in the city of Zootropolis. In a human context, the same pattern can be observed regarding people of different ethnicities or origins, as Little et al. have pointed out in their research (Little et al. 329). As the speech analysis has shown, the stereotypical representation of gender also dominates the linguistic behaviour of the animals in the film. Male animals show more instances of assertive language than female ones and the way female animals are spoken about frequently shows that they are perceived as less competent and influential than their male counterparts. This gender asymmetry is further highlighted by the way most scenes in the movie are framed. While male characters commonly occupy more space within the frame and are portrayed in the centre of the upper part of the frame, female characters are allocated significantly less space and they often appear at the bottom of the screen. As Giannetti has indicated, the upper part of the frame represents power, authority and importance, while the lower part of the frame stands for a lack thereof (Giannetti 54). In brief, all the analysed aspects of the film emphasise the same, stereotypical

representation of men and women and comply with stereotypical gender roles. Consequently, the female characters are shown as more emotional, weaker and dependent on a male character, while the male animals are portrayed as strong, independent agents.

The analytical part of this thesis is based on the insights gained through conducting a literature review as well as the observations made from analysing specific scenes of the film employing analytical and methodological tools such as *mise en scène* or speech analysis. It is crucial to state, however, that the outcomes of this research are not based on statistical evidence and thus should not be used to make general claims on this topic. The respective thesis can be seen as a basis for further investigation and analysis, which would lead to a more representative outcome in this matter.

7. References

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Howard, Byron and Rich Moore. *Zootopia*. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, 2016

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Image 4: News Reporters in Zootopia 73

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8. Appendix

Abstract

Bambi, The Lion King or Zootopia are to name but a few famous Walt Disney films which star animated animals as main characters. The animals in those movies are anthropomorphised, meaning they are attributed human-like characteristics and behaviours (Epley et al. 144). Consequently, stereotypes and prejudices that are present in human society are portrayed in the fictional world of each movie. This thesis investigates to which end anthropomorphism is used to reenforce or counteract gender and social stereotypes in the Disney film *Zootopia*, which features animated animals coexisting in a human-like society. In order to obtain valid insights, theoretical frameworks from the research area of gender and animal studies will be used, as well as methodological tools such as speech analysis or framing and composition from the area of *mise en scène*. Specific scenes and interactions between characters will be examined and the outcome will be discussed referring to insights obtained through the literature review. The results of each analytical chapter will be reviewed in the discussion section of the thesis.

Zusammenfassung

Der König der Löwen, Bambi oder der 2016 erschienene Film Zootopia sind nur einige der berühmten Walt Disney-Filme, in denen animierte Tiere die Hauptrolle spielen. Die Tiere, die in den oben genannten Filmen vorkommen haben menschenähnliche Eigenschaften, sie sind anthropomorphisiert (Epley et al. 144). Da die animierten Tiere in einer menschenähnlichen Gesellschaft leben, zeigen sich in der fiktionalen Welt Probleme wie Vorurteile, Diskriminierung oder Stereotypen, welche auch in einer menschlichen Gesellschaft zu sehen sind. Das Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es zu untersuchen, welche stereotypischen Geschlechterrollen oder soziale Stereotype im Film gezeigt werden und ob die Darstellung der Tiere diese verstärkt oder schwächt. Um ein aussagekräftiges Ergebnis zu erreichen, stützt sich die Analyse dieser Arbeit auf wesentliche Theorien der *gender studies* sowie der *animal studies*. Darüber hinaus werden methodische Werkzeuge wie eine Sprachanalyse, oder Rahmung und Komposition aus dem Bereich *mise en scène*, ein Fachbereich der Filmanalyse, eingesetzt um den Film und dessen Inhalte eingehend zu untersuchen. Wesentliche Szenen des Films Zootopia werden mittels der oben genannten Werkzeuge, sowie basierend auf den Theorien aus *gender* und *animal studies* analysiert. Die daraus gewonnen Einsichten werden im letzten Teil der Arbeit diskutiert und mit vorhergehenden Recherchen anderer Wissenschaftler verglichen.