‘Into the Unknown’: Using facet methodology to explore the Disney Princess Phenomenon

Robyn Muir

Abstract
The Disney Princesses are 18 royal characters featured in Disney and Pixar animated films, merchandise, marketing, and consumer experiences, marketed towards young consumers. Whilst much research has focussed on the representation of gender in Disney Princess films, there has been little focus on the rest of princess culture. This article argues that to understand the Disney Princess Phenomenon in its entirety, a new methodology must be introduced to the field. The article introduces Mason's facet methodology as a methodological innovation to the fields of Disney and feminist media studies. A creative and innovative approach that allows researchers to ‘play’ with different methods to explore cultural phenomenon. Facet methodology imagines the selected phenomenon as a gemstone, where each ‘element’ or ‘part’ of the phenomenon is a facet of the overall gem. By using different methods to explore each facet, researchers can use findings to refract and reflect ‘light’ on each of the different elements of the phenomenon, demonstrating its entwined nature. The paper firstly outlines Jennifer Mason’s facet methodology. Secondly, it introduces the facets identified in the Disney Princess Phenomenon: films, merchandising and marketing, and consumer experiences. The article then focuses on how facet methodology enabled a creative and holistic approach to studying each facet of the princess phenomenon through a variety of research methods: textual analysis, interviews, content analysis, and autoethnography. The paper then reflects on the approach of facet methodology for research on the Disney Princess Phenomenon and in feminist media studies and media and communication, arguing that facet methodology provides researchers with insights to phenomena we would otherwise not uncover due to its holistic approach.

Keywords
Disney princess, disney, femininity, gender, facet methodology, autoethnography, popular culture, feminist media studies, media

Introduction
The Disney Princesses have been a long-studied area within media and culture (Craven, 2002; Davis, 2006; Dundes, 2001; Edwards, 1999; England et al., 2011; Lester, 2010; Mollet, 2020; Ohmer, 2006; Stott, 2004; Stover, 2013; Zsubori, 2022). The 11 franchised princes that have adorned our screens, shops and theme parks are a worldwide commercial and cultural phenomenon making $1.686bn in 2018 alone (The Licensing Letter, 2019). Disney Princesses are present in many areas of culture such as television, films, consumer experiences, marketing, and costume play (cosplaying)—their depictions of femininity complex and shifting. Therefore, the way we examine the princesses and similar media franchises must change as well. I argue facet methodology gives researchers insights we otherwise would not uncover due to its holistic approach. It can be used to explore shifting and complex phenomena within feminist media studies and media and communications. It provides a new application of shifting and complex phenomena within feminist media studies and media and communications with the flexibility to examine emerging and existing mediums within cultural phenomena. In this article, I will explain how I used Mason’s (2011) facet methodology in relation to feminist research.

1University of Surrey, Surrey, UK

Corresponding author:
Robyn Muir, University of Surrey, Stag Hill, University Campus, Guildford GU2 7XH, UK.
Email: r.muir@surrey.ac.uk
media studies to demonstrate the scope of this under-used approach, and how it will provide an innovative methodological contribution to fields such as feminist media studies, media and communication and beyond.

Established ways of approaching the Disney Princesses focus on analysis of films (Craven, 2002; Davis, 2006; Dundes, 2001; Edwards, 1999; England et al., 2011; Hefner et al., 2017; Lester, 2010; Maity, 2014; Mollet, 2020; Ohmer, 2006; Stott, 2004; Stover, 2013) and theme parks (Shuler, 2015; Williams, 2020). The central argument is whether depictions of heroines have progressed (Davis, 2006, 2014; Do Rozario, 2004; Hine et al., 2018; Hoermer, 1996; Itmeizeh and Ma’ayeh, 2017; Lacroix, 2004; Mollet, 2020; Wasko, 2001; Zarranz, 2007) or regressed (Rudloff, 2016; Stover, 2013; Whelan, 2012). However, these studies have not been revised to include the most recent princesses, nor do they illustrate the entwined relationship between the different parts of the Princess Phenomenon (films, theme parks, and merchandise), and how that may impact their portrayal. What if consumers and scholars alike look beyond the franchise to princesses who have been excluded, and to under-studied elements of princess culture, such as merchandise and consumer experiences? It is at this intersection that I identified the Disney Princess Phenomenon, consisting of 18 royal characters featured in animated Disney and Pixar films that are admired by young consumers across the globe.

van Zoonen (2006) argues ‘the media have always been at the centre of feminist critique’ (p.11), and the Disney Princesses are no exception. Whilst current research has focussed on depictions of gender within franchised films, my research examines the image of femininity within all princess films, alongside merchandise, marketing, and consumer experiences through a feminist lens (Muir, 2023). By exploring the various mediums that feature the Disney Princesses, I demonstrate how facet methodology can expand the methodological approaches of feminist media studies and media communications by holistically examining wider media sources such as merchandising, marketing and theme park experiences. Hanisch (1969) argues ‘the personal is the political’. I build on this, arguing it is the princesses that are the political. Debates around public and private knowledge, activities, and issues continue to dominate scholarly discussions of gender (Harvey, 2020: 10). Often, women’s experiences are relegated to the private sphere (Bachmann et al., 2018: 4). In media, women have been absent or portrayed in stereotypical domestic roles such as housewives; women’s television and films that highlighted women’s issues or interests were deemed as ‘trivial’ and unworthy of analysis (Carter and Steiner, 2003: 14–15; The Telegraph, 2016; Tuchman, 1978). Recently, women’s representations are far more complex and nuanced (Kanzler, 2019; Orgad, 2017; Sobande, 2019; Sykes, 2021; Wanzo, 2016). My feminist analysis of the Disney Princess Phenomenon de-trivialises a worldwide sensation in girl culture, making the ‘invisible visible’ and rendering ‘the trivial important’ (Reinharz, 1992: 248). Importantly, facet methodology’s innovative and creative approach enabled me to explore new areas of the Disney Princesses in relation to one another, which I discuss in this article.

My research builds on the analysis of the Disney Princesses in two ways. Firstly, it examines the Princess Phenomenon rather than the franchise to explore which princesses are excluded and what their characteristics are (and whether they differ to those that are included). Through facet methodology, I identified five waves of femininity depicted within princess films, and how these waves were connected to different facets of the Princess Phenomenon. The term ‘waves’ indicates the shifting nature of the representation of the princesses. Secondly, this introduces a new way to examine the phenomenon, rather than focussing solely on films. To examine such a complex phenomenon that has multiple outlets, I argue cultural phenomenon such as the Disney Princesses can be explored in a more nuanced way using facet methodology, creating ‘a strategically illuminating set of facets in relation to specific research concerns and questions’ surrounding how the image of femininity is produced and reinforced throughout the phenomenon (Mason, 2011: 77).

Through facet methodology, I highlight the intersecting facets of the Princess Phenomenon and explore how femininity is depicted within it, contributing to the depth of feminist media analysis. As feminist media studies continues to examine new forms of media, I argue facet methodology is a helpful approach for analysing the diverse connections between different media forms to demonstrate media convergence, saturation, and its relationship with society. Sometimes, this analysis requires multiple methods, and facet methodology not only enables this but encourages the researcher to make deeper connections between the different media formats. Using facet methodology, I explore the relationship between films and their corresponding consumer experiences such as merchandising, marketing and theme park interactions through a feminist lens.

Many feminist media scholars have examined the implications of the representation of women within media (Bachmann et al., 2018: 1–2; Gill, 2007; Harvey, 2020; MacDonald, 1995; McRobbie, 2009, 2020; Mulvey, 1975; Tuchman, 1979; Tuchman et al., 1978; van Zoonen, 2006; Whelan, 2000) through diverse mediums: film (Kennedy, 2018, 2019; Lloyd and Johnson, 2003; Stacey, 1994; Vares, 2002), television (Ang, 1985; Arthurs, 2003, 2004; Brown, 1994; Brusdon, 2000; Fiske, 1987; Geraghty, 1990; Kennedy, 2014, 2019; Press, 1991), news (Mills, 1990, 1997; Rhodes, 2001; Sebb, 1994; van Zoonen, 1998), magazines (Ballaster et al., 1991; Basu, 2001; Beetham, 1996; Coulter and Moruzzi, 2020; Currie, 1999; Hermes, 1995; McCracken, 1993; McRobbie, 1982), pornography (Arthurs, 2004; Coward, 1982; Dworkin, 1980, 1981; Leong, 1991; Vance, 1984), and advertising (Coulter, 2014; Duffy, 2010; MacDonald, 1995). I argue facet methodology answers...
Carter’s, Steiner’s and McLaughlin’s call for ‘more nuanced and multifaceted understandings’ (2013: 1) of gender and the media, and van Zoonen’s identification of more ‘new and creative methods of data gathering’ (2006: 128). This is especially important to consider as media systems continue to converge. Whilst we may not initially consider Princess merchandise and theme park experiences as forms of media, the way both facets of the phenomenon are used to commodify and mediate the Princess films (Grusin and Bolter, 2000: 169–170; Wasko, 2020: 523) cannot be ignored (Mittermeier, 2020: 8,9). This remediation of Princess merchandising, marketing and consumer experiences is another way for images of femininity to be reinforced to young consumers and must be examined carefully, through an eclectic mix of data gathering and research methods. The Disney Princesses are more than their films. Their merchandise, marketing and consumer experiences all contribute to a much-needed wider understanding of how images of femininity can be produced and continually reinforced through other forms of media. Facet methodology enables researchers to look at the whole phenomenon to explore these patterns of dominance.

I argue the use of facet methodology highlights the intersecting structures of a phenomenon, which through the growing use of different media forms increases understandings of how they can intersect and impact each other. By focussing on the Princess Phenomenon rather than just films, we can understand how images of femininity highlighted in the films are also transferred to other areas, which continually reinforce specific images of femininity to consumers. As media systems continue to converge, facet methodology is key to exploring phenomena in the future as media products continue to intertwine. This provides a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon itself and broadens analysis of the Disney Princesses to include non-franchised Princesses. To do this, I adapt and expand on methods and approaches used by other Disney scholars (Davis, 2006; England et al., 2011). Overall, I address the under-researched areas of Princess merchandise and consumer experiences, highlighting how facet methodology provides researchers with a creative and innovative way to explore wider cultural phenomena, providing unique and holistic insights.

In this article, I argue facet methodology facilitates scholars from feminist media studies, media and communications and beyond to design creative research methodologies to uncover hidden connections and intersections within complex phenomena. To demonstrate how facet methodology can be used from a media perspective, this article will serve two purposes. First, I outline and situate Mason’s (2011) concept of facet methodology and its uses to provide an updated account. Then, I illustrate how I use this approach to reveal the different ‘facets’ of the Disney Princess Phenomenon within the context of feminist media studies, demonstrating how other scholars may wish to use facet methodology. I introduce three ‘research problematics’ (Mason, 2011: 76) which map onto three identified facets: Princess films; Princess merchandise and marketing; and Princess consumer experiences in theme parks. Within each facet, I discuss the research methods I used to create a holistic understanding of the Disney Princess Phenomenon, and how facet methodology provided more in-depth analysis of the phenomenon.

**Situating facet methodology**

Facet methodology was developed by Jennifer Mason, Katherine Davies, Carol Smart, and Brian Heaphy at the Morgan Centre for Research into Everyday Lives at the University of Manchester. It was a response to the identification of multiple lines of enquiry and approaches to their research problematics, with the scholars wanting to ‘step outside or beyond existing ways of thinking about these things’ (Mason, 2011:76). Whilst existing methods such as bricolage (Kincheloe, 2001; Kincheloe and Berry, 2004) and integrated mixed methods (Branen, 2005; Mason, 2006) approach research as a layered process (Kincheloe and Berry, 2004:108), I argue facet methodology addresses the issues found within both approaches by providing a holistic understanding as opposed to layered.2

As discussed later in this article, there are several existing methods used to examine Disney Princesses: discursive; thematic; content and textual analysis. There is little research conducted on Princess merchandise, or experiences of Disney Princesses in the Disney theme parks (Shuler, 2015; Williams, 2020). Whilst I could have used a bricolage or mixed methods approach, these layering and multi-strategy techniques do not provide the same holistic depth of analysis that is achieved with facet methodology. Like Mason, I wanted to move beyond traditional ways of examining my research subject. I use facet methodology to examine the Disney Princesses as a cultural phenomenon to demonstrate its complex and intertwined nature. My primary interest for the Disney Princess Phenomenon is to identify facets that demonstrate how each facet is ‘connected and entwined’, rather than approaching the phenomenon as though each element was separate (Mason, 2011: 79). Facet methodology encourages researchers to see their chosen research subject as a whole entity, rather than separate layers that are later combined.

Mason and her colleagues define facet methodology as an ‘evolving approach’ to be used in social research (2011: 75). She argues facet methodology contributes to and extends debates around ‘politics of method’, namely how sociologists must renew ‘their interests in methodological innovation, and reporting critically on new digitalisations’, and engage with ‘a radical mixture of methods coupled with renewed critical reflection’ (Savage and Burrows, 2007: 895–896). Savage and Burrows (2007) call for researchers to work with new forms of methodology, knowledge, and data. Facet methodology answers this call through its innovative and creative design, allowing researchers to engage with multiple creative methods that have been designed
to examine each facet. I wholeheartedly agree that facet methodology can go beyond the boundaries of sociology thanks to its ‘trans or inter-disciplinary disposition, and epistemological openness’ (Mason, 2011:86), which is demonstrated by the studies that have already used it. Although it is a new approach within social sciences, it has already been used in a diverse range of fields such as dance and family studies (Sharp and DeCesaro, 2015); health sciences (Phoenix and Bell, 2019); education (Mann and Warr, 2017); feminism (Lewis et al., 2015, 2018; Marine and Lewis, 2014); psychology (Larkin et al., 2019); child studies (Conn, 2015; Koch, 2019); and sociology (Davies and Heaphy, 2011). My research adds feminist media studies to this growing list. Whilst others have used facet methodology in their research, they have not explicitly explained how. Before addressing this, I want to provide an outline of this approach in relation to feminist media studies and Disney Princesses.

What is facet methodology?

Facet methodology allows researchers to use creative approaches and methods to uncover knowledge from complex phenomena through a number of ‘mini studies using different clusters of methods’ which they define as ‘facets’ (Mason, 2011: 76). Rather than defining it as a step-by-step procedure, facet methodology is an approach that ‘celebrates researcher creativity, inventiveness, a “playful” approach to epistemology, and the pursuit of flashes of insight’ (Mason, 2011: 76).

Mason uses the metaphor of a gemstone to explain this more clearly:

...the facets in the gemstone are conceived as different methodological-substantive planes and surfaces, which are designed to be capable of casting and refracting light in a variety of ways that help to define the overall object of concern (2011: 77).

When imagining a gemstone, you can imagine that whilst you are looking at one whole ‘gem’, it contains different sides and reflections. Therefore, when looking at social phenomena, we can recognise that these are ‘similarly multifaceted and perspectives on them can vary depending on how they are illuminated through methodological and interpretative practices’ (Mann and Warr, 2017: 549). This also means that you can see facets differently depending on how you examine them. If we imagine the Disney Princess Phenomenon as the singular gemstone, we can envision how each side or ‘facet’ of the gemstone represents a different element: Princess films, marketing, merchandising, and consumer experiences. Although each of these ‘facets’ are different, when combined they make up the gemstone, or in this case, the Princess Phenomenon. Mason explains each facet requires researchers to use ‘different lines of enquiry’ and ‘different ways of seeing’ (2011: 77), allowing them to use multiple methods for each facet to explore the phenomenon. This results in a wider understanding of the research subject, as this is rooted in multiple combinations of ‘what we are looking at (the thing itself, the ontology), and how we are looking (how we use our methods to perceive it, the epistemology)’ (Mason, 2011: 77). As this is being done numerous times and, in many ways, the researcher can provide multiple, entwined perspectives on complex phenomena, uncovering new findings and knowledge. For example, I use textual analysis to identify images of femininity in Princess films, and content analysis to explore which images of femininity were dominant in Princess merchandise. This combination allows me to identify how femininity is depicted within the Disney Princess Phenomenon and which models of femininity are the most marketed and dominant within merchandising. Although the two elements (films and marketing) are separate facets, the facet approach allows me to demonstrate how they are connected through the models of femininity identified within the research. It also tells me how these different mediums influence one another, which will present a particular image of femininity to consumers. That is the aim of facet methodology. It creates ‘a strategically illuminating set of facets in relation to specific research concerns and questions’ (Mason, 2011: 77).

Facet methodology facilitates a deeper entwined understanding of the whole phenomenon and allows researchers to identify interwoven patterns that impact one another. By analysing films first, I was able to identify different images of femininity that were situated within cultural history. I identified five ‘waves’ of images of femininity: passive dreamers (Snow White, Cinderella, Aurora), lost dreamers (Eilonwy, Ariel, Belle, Jasmine), active leaders (Pocahontas, Mulan, Kida), sacrificing dreamers (Tiana, Rapunzel) and innovative leaders (Merida, Anna, Elsa, and Moana) (Muir, 2023). I clearly mapped how depictions of the princesses had changed over time, contextualised within cultural history. By comparing this with content analysis of Princess merchandise, I illuminated certain images were more dominant, which meant certain images are more dominant for consumers to interpret and engage with as role models (Muir, 2023). This is a significant strength of facet methodology, as this uncovers knowledge that otherwise may not have been identified, or at least not to a great extent. As media continues to converge, facet methodology allows researchers to demonstrate how well popular culture is remediated throughout society.

Therefore, this approach involves more than simply listing the different layers of a phenomenon. Rather, it seeks to discover how different aspects or facets of a phenomenon are entwined with one another (Mason, 2011: 79). This is how multiple methods can produce knowledge about a phenomenon, so that researchers can investigate how each facet contributes to how we see the whole research subject (Mason, 2011: 79).
Researching facets

Mason (2011) defines facets as:

...mini investigations that involve clusters of methods focussed on strategically and artfully selected sets of related questions, puzzles and problematics. Each facet represents a way or ways of looking at and investigating something that is theoretically interesting or puzzling in relation to the overall enquiry (p.79).

Like sides of a gemstone, facets can be large or small (Mason, 2011: 80). Additionally, the level of insight from facets is not determined by study size. The smallest facet could produce the largest insight to the research question if the researcher has skilfully and imaginatively carved and interpreted the facet (Mason, 2011: 80). However, facets may also change throughout the research process as new insights are discovered and developed at various stages of research (Mason, 2011: 83).

Mason argues facets should ‘trouble’ existing knowledge and assumptions (2011: 82). To do this, facet methodology allows researchers to use a flexible range of data and methods to explore facets on a deeper level (Mason, 2011: 83). Any methods can be used, qualitative, quantitative or a mixture of the two (Mason, 2011: 84). However, Mason does not define it as a mixed methods approach. She argues facet methodology ‘is not any kind of approach to methods alone, mixed or otherwise’, rather it is both ‘epistemological and substantive’ (Mason, 2011: 84). It also does not require the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Its emphasis is, as Larkin et al. (2019) offer, ‘different ways of seeing’ (192). This is highlighted by Davies and Heaphy (2011) who explain their ‘multi-faceted methodology incorporated a number of mini-studies which offered different lenses on the research problem, the aim being to experiment with different methods applied in various specific contexts in order to look at critical associations from a number of angles’ (p.7). Davies and Heaphy’s use of ‘angles’ to describe their focus is key for differentiating facet methodology from similar methods such as bricolage and mixed methods approaches.

During my own research of Disney Princesses, I found that as I was researching one area, I was continually thinking how it impacted and interacted with other facets of the phenomenon. Once I had identified the five images of femininity within the films, I conducted an autoethnography to examine Princess consumer experiences. The narrative created by Princess films has a direct impact on how princesses are portrayed in theme parks, as there must be consistency between who consumers see on screen and who they meet at Disney parks. Exploring this relationship through my film framework and autoethnography illuminated how princess characteristics had been remediated for real life consumer experiences. And this was only revealed thanks to facet methodology. Here, I am not using facet methodology to examine the same thing (just films, or just theme park experiences) as you perhaps would with mixed methods to triangulate your findings. I used it to examine different yet connected facets that gave me further insight to the Princess Phenomenon as a whole. This gave me insights I wouldn’t have otherwise achieved. This strength of facet methodology allowed me to identify the importance of remediation and convergence within feminist media studies more widely.

Mason (2011) wants to avoid facet methodology being seen as a hierarchical approach where methods must integrate and triangulate with one another (p.84). Facets will produce different interactions depending on the environment they are conducted in (Davies and Heaphy, 2011: 7). In some cases, my autoethnography highlighted that princesses would adapt characteristics that were not necessarily from their film, which added a deeper analysis to my images of femininity. Therefore, facet methodology encourages researchers to see their chosen phenomenon as the gemstone and enables us to identify and investigate patterns we may not have otherwise seen through mixed methods research.

I use creatively collated research methods to provide multiple flashes of insight into a complex phenomenon (Mason, 2011: 82; Marine and Lewis, 2014: 14; Lewis et al., 2015, 2018: 61): the Disney Princesses. Textual analysis highlights how femininity is depicted in each film. Content analysis provides insight on which Princesses (and therefore images of femininity) were featured in merchandising. Interviews produce expert industry knowledge on how a product is designed, created, and marketed. Autoethnography illuminates how femininity is depicted in consumer experiences. Each method provides a critical flash of insight that collectively explores the depiction of femininity across a complex global phenomenon, rather than a descriptive summary of the Disney Princesses (Mason, 2011: 83; Marine and Lewis, 2014: 14–15; Lewis et al., 2018). This demonstrates how media is converging to more areas such as merchandise and theme parks, providing researchers with an innovative way of exploring how brands use different elements of media (films, merchandise, consumer experiences) to expand their franchises and products within culture. Like fan studies, facet methodology de-trivialises and makes visible these franchises and phenomenon as they continue to expand into new areas of consumer culture (Alhayek, 2017; Bacon-Smith, 1992; Booth and Williams, 2021; Brough and Shresthova, 2012; Jenkins, 1992, 2006; Reinharz, 1992: 248).

Going ’Into the Unknown’: Identifying facets within the Princess Phenomenon

I situate the Princesses as role models that have significant reach in multiple areas of popular culture and contribute to how consumers make meaning from the phenomenon. By exploring multiple facets, I illuminate how they contribute to the construction and reinforcement of femininity within cultural phenomena targeted at young consumers. Here, I will be outlining my approach, and how facet methodology can
provide feminist media studies with a new way to explore existing and growing forms of media.

So far, I have identified three key facets that make up the Disney Princess Phenomenon: films, marketing/merchandising, and consumer experiences. To explore how femininity is depicted in each, I examined three issues: how models of femininity are depicted in films; which of these models are dominant within merchandising; and whether these depictions of femininity are reflected in consumer experiences with Princesses. Each question is inextricably linked, emphasising Mason’s aim for facet methodology to ‘create facets that seek out the entwinements and contingencies, instead of approaching the world as though these things are separate’ (Mason, 2011: 79). Each facet has different units of analysis to examine the phenomenon from several angles (Davies and Heaphy, 2011: 7). This allows me to gain a holistic understanding of the Princess Phenomenon, from conception (films) to association and commodification (merchandising, marketing, consumer experiences). Each Princess featured in the phenomenon enters through their appearance in a film. This is the first way that consumers are exposed to the Princesses. Consumers can then continue to associate with the Princesses by using their merchandise and meeting them at the Disney theme parks. Princess merchandise can be purchased in a range of shops internationally and have varied price ranges that are as affordable or as luxurious as consumers desire. Disney theme parks are the only physical place in the world where consumers can ‘meet’ their favourite Princess. Although the Princesses are featured in more consumer experiences than this (such as books, magazines and theatre shows), the films, products, and theme park experiences are the most prominent ways that consumers can interact with the Princesses (approved by Disney). An advantage of this approach is that researchers can continue building more facets into their chosen phenomenon as new innovations are created and discovered. In future research I could examine more remediations of the princesses through film sequels, books, magazines or the ‘Dream Big Princess’ marketing campaign. These different facets, where the princess narrative is perhaps redressed or developed further would illuminate new understandings of the overall Princess Phenomenon. I will now provide an overview of the three facets I am currently exploring, and how they each illuminate their deep-rooted connections with one another.

**Facet 1: Images of femininity in Disney Princess films**

Each Princess’s market ‘life’ begins with a film. From here, merchandising and marketing campaigns are produced, and consumer experiences are introduced at Disney theme parks. Any models of femininity produced in the film may be transferred to further marketing and experiences. Therefore, I began with films. Disney Princess films have been approached using different methods. Examples include discourse analysis (Wohlwend, 2009); thematic analysis (Towbin et al., 2004); content analysis (England et al., 2011; Faherty, 2001; Robinson et al., 2007) and textual analysis (Do Rozario, 2004; Dundes, 2001; Edwards, 1999; Lacroix, 2004; Maity, 2014; Ross, 2004; Zarranz, 2007). These approaches are commonly used within feminist media studies (van Zoonen, 2006). Some studies have also focussed on femininity and the Princesses (Davis, 2006; Zarranz, 2007). Due to their times of publication, many of these studies have not been able to include some of the newer Princesses from more recent films. I identify five different images of femininity in all current franchised and non-franchised films and explore which of these images are more dominant. By providing a thick description of each full Princess film and their dominant characteristics, I deliver a qualitative understanding of the depiction of femininity within Princess films. This analysis forms the foundation to understand connections with the remaining two facets.

I achieve this using textual analysis, where researchers interpret a text (be it a film, television programme, or advertisements) to understand how individuals or cultures might understand the messages within that text (McKee, 2003: 1) and make meaning from it (Click and Kramer, 2007: 247). My analysis of the films contributes to an already rich field of textual analysis (Do Rozario, 2004; Dundes, 2001; Edwards, 1999; Lacroix, 2004; Maity, 2014; Ross, 2004; Zarranz, 2007). I include new and under-researched Princesses: Eilwony (*The Black Cauldron* 1985), Kida (*Atlantis: The Lost Empire* 2001), Anna and Elsa (*Frozen*, 2013; *Frozen II*, 2019) and Moana (*Moana*, 2016). I use textual analysis within my film analysis framework to identify patterns of femininity depicted in the films, evaluating how femininity has been depicted through character development, plotline, movement, and interactions (Muir, 2023). Here, I am specifically building on ‘who says what, to whom, and with what effect?’ (van Zoonen, 2006: 27). Patterns established, I indicate the relationship between patterns of femininity in the films, how they change over time, and which are the most dominant (van Zoonen, 2006: 66) in other facets of the phenomenon.

Textual analysis can provide a rich and unique interpretation of a text, especially for feminist media scholars (McRobbie, 1982). It consists of ‘close readings of how media objects from television to magazines to video games, represent the world’ (Harvey, 2020: 39). Although these interpretations are subjective to the researcher, the analysis contributes to a wider understanding of a phenomenon. Textual analysis is subject to the ‘readers’ (i.e. my own) interpretation, therefore it was important to acknowledge this research was adding another voice to a rich dialogue. I was also mindful of my own experiences that could influence the way that I interpret a text (Harvey, 2020: 33). Firstly, I am, and always have been heavily entrenched within Disney Princess ‘culture’, I grew up watching Princess films and...
wanted to ensure I used my detailed knowledge to enhance my understanding of the models of femininity depicted in films, which I could then explore further through different research methods and facets to create a holistic understanding. Secondly, I am a white, middle-class university educated, heterosexual, cisgender woman, and my interpretations are shaped by my experiences. This is another advantage of facet methodology, as it ‘assumes that the world and what we seek to understand about it is not only lived and experienced, but is multi-dimensional, contingent, relationally implicated and entwined’ (Mason, 2011: 78). As someone whose life has been embedded within Disney Princess culture, I am well situated to critically explore all its elements and invite others to do the same (Harvey, 2020:33). I hope my forthcoming film analysis framework will provide an invitation to others to interpret Princess films (Muir, 2023), leading to more diverse voices in this field. Facet methodology’s flexibility of scale is another advantage here. The film framework produced from my research enables other researchers to add their voices and analysis to the wider Disney Princess ‘gemstone’. Rather than my research existing as a separate entity to someone else’s, facet methodology enables my ‘gemstone’ to be part of a bigger feminist analysis of the Disney Princesses, along with many other diverse scholars, illuminating different facets of the same phenomenon. These possibilities demonstrate how feminist media and communications scholars can use facet methodology to explore different shifting and complex phenomenon.

Combining my facet of film analysis with other methods such as content analysis, interviews and autoethnography in other facets allows research to continue to provide a wider insight to phenomenon, rather than the researcher imposing cultural meanings of their own interpretation (Phillipov, 2013: 212). Overall, the film analysis I conduct to explore the first facet of the Princess Phenomenon provides the largest foundational flash of insight that begins to refract through the following facets I explore. This is often the aim of facet methodology, ‘to create facets that seek out the entwinements and contingencies, instead of approaching the world as though these things are separate’ (Mason, 2011: 79). On reflection, facet methodology enabled me to create an innovative film analysis framework that included cultural history and box office returns to situate Princess films within society, as well as explore the representation of femininity. Once I explore the facet of how the image of femininity has been depicted in films, I examine how images of femininity within films are entwined with Princess merchandise and consumer experiences.

**Facet 2: Images of femininity in Disney Princess merchandising and marketing**

Whilst merchandise is an understudied topic in feminist media studies, I argue consumer products are a way to continue to reinforce gendered stereotypes, with facet methodology providing researchers with the opportunity to uncover connections between multiple facets. This is especially relevant for the Disney Princess Phenomenon, as the Disney Princesses and images of femininity they portray are commodified and remediated through merchandise. Therefore, to explore a fuller impact of the Disney Princesses, we must turn to Princess products.

Disney merchandising has been discussed by Disney scholars such as Alan Bryman (1995, 2010), Andi Stein (2011) and Janet Wasko (2001). It has also been a topic for discussion amongst other areas of academic research such as psychology and education (Lamb and Brown, 2006). These discussions have been textually analytical and use case studies to analyse the merchandising techniques of the Walt Disney Company. I build on this through content analysis and interviews. Each method contributes to a further understanding of the Princess merchandising and marketing process, simultaneously exploring another facet of the phenomenon. Content analysis provides evidence of clear patterns within merchandise, indicating what type of merchandise is available, and for which Princess. Interviews provide more in-depth information about merchandising and marketing processes of the Walt Disney Company. Combining these methods together through facet methodology provides a holistic understanding of the consumer experience facet of the phenomenon and demonstrates how the Princess Phenomenon commodifies itself through other forms of media.

**Content analysis**

Content analysis is considered a very flexible method for researchers (Cavanagh, 1997) and can be used qualitatively or quantitatively to provide a ‘condensed and broad description of the phenomenon’ which produces ‘concepts or categories describing the phenomenon’ (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008: 108–109). A traditional method for feminist media scholars when examining media outputs such as films (Haskell, 1989; Rosen, 1973; Smith et al., 2017), television (Thoveron, 1986), news (Bathla, 2004) and advertising (Courtney and Whipple, 1983), content analysis enables researchers to quantify media, and compare its features with reality (van Zoonen, 2006:69) and quantify characteristics and roles (van Zoonen, 2006: 127). Whilst I do not use content analysis to explore films because I provide a thick description of the images of femininity, the combination of content analysis to ‘shed light on social and cultural matters of representation’ (van Zoonen, 2006: 73) in other areas of the Princess Phenomenon results in my identification of which images of femininity are dominant in Disney’s merchandising and marketing strategy. Therefore, facet methodology identifies a relationship between film, merchandise, and business strategy. The film facet allows me to identify the five images of femininity, whereas the merchandising facet refracts the light that has been shone on the films to a new area of the phenomenon, linking them simultaneously. I can identify which of
the five images of femininity are dominant in Princess merchandising and what this means for consumers. I found that when non-franchised princesses were included in the data, the most popular image of femininity was the innovative leaders thanks to the dominant presence of Anna and Elsa. If you removed the non-franchised princesses from the content analysis, it was still the passive and lost dreamers who were most dominant. These findings allowed me to explore what this may mean for consumer meaning making in more depth.

Although this method has not been used to analyse Disney Princess products before, it has been used in other studies on merchandising, focussing on appearance and values (Auster and Mansbach, 2012; Hirdes et al., 2009). Whilst I investigate whether the Disney Princess Phenomenon depicts models of femininity within merchandising and marketing, I may not always be able to point out depictions of femininity on the products. This is because these products have printed pictures of the Princesses, often just standing, or sitting near each other, rather than completing a task. This is a finding in itself. From my own experiences of seeing other Disney products for Marvel or Star Wars, I often see male characters in an ‘active’ pose, Iron Man is flying, The Hulk is punching something. Meanwhile, Princesses are often stood or sat, staring back at me, claspings their hands near their face. I examine what type of products are available and investigate whether some Princesses are marketed more than others. I categorised different types of merchandise: identification products (dresses, shoes, tiaras); association products with multiple princesses (products with several princesses included); association products with one princess (products with one princess and/or any other character from her film); DVDs; and supplemental products (items related to the film, but do not feature the princess herself) (Muir, 2023). I could identify which princesses were dominant in each category, and which princesses were more dominant than others. Through this I am revealing ‘scales of presence and absence... as well as patterns of inclusion and exclusion’ (Harvey, 2020: 43). Through facet methodology I use these findings in combination with my film analysis to create a better understanding of the models of femininity that the Disney Princess Phenomenon is producing and reproducing. This provides an entwined understanding of two facets within the phenomenon, creating ‘flashes of insight’ (Mason, 2011: 80) into how images of femininity are continually reproduced throughout various mediations of the phenomenon. In this way, facet methodology also acknowledges and remedies feminist media scholar’s critique of only using textual analysis, and the need for other methods such as audience research to explore meaning making (van Zoonen, 2006: 105; Zsbori, 2022). Whilst it was beyond the scope of this study to conduct research on audience reception of the Princesses, the combination of content analysis, interviews and autoethnography enable a deeper, more illuminated understanding of Disney’s merchandising strategies and outcomes. I could clearly identify from the film facet’s textual analysis which princesses were demonstrating the most empowered images of femininity (active and innovative leaders). Then in the merchandising facet I could demonstrate that the least empowered princesses (passive and lost dreamers) were featured the most in products if analysing the Disney Princess Franchise, and the most empowered princesses (innovative leaders) if examining the Disney Princess Phenomenon (Muir, 2023). This is an important distinction, as many princesses within the innovative leaders (Anna, Elsa and Moana) are not ‘official’ members of the Disney Princess Franchise, which could impact the way consumers engage with the brand and who they associate as a ‘princess’. Facet methodology enabled me to uncover these deeper connections between the two facets.

Facet methodology allows this combination of methods to explore two different facets, with my next project focussing on audience reception as the next facet in the Princess Phenomenon. This research building enabled by facet methodology is one of its biggest strengths. Whilst it could be argued that this could lead to a lack of finality on a research project, the creativity, flexibility, and buildability of facet methodology overcomes the lack of finality it may introduce. The exploration of products available to consumers is still answering feminist media studies’ call to ‘understand cultural products (or ‘texts’) as they are understood by audiences’ (Lewis, 1991: 47). By examining which products are available to consumers, and therefore what choices consumers can make in relation to participating in Princess culture illuminates the cyclical relationship between consumer demand and product availability, and how they are continually informing each other (that without facet methodology would have been missed). Merchandise consumers are still audiences of the Princess Phenomenon, and the options available to them must be closely examined to understand the whole phenomenon.

Facet methodology illuminates the deep connection between Princess films and their merchandise through the exploration and refraction of two different facets. It allows the researcher to analyse them separately and together. Feminist media studies is continually expanding its examination of media texts, as gender roles can be reinforced through other means of commodification: merchandise and branding (Banet-Weiser, 2004, 2007, 2012, 2018).

**Interviews**

In-depth interviews have been used regularly in feminist media studies to explore ‘the position and experiences of women working in the communication industries’ (van Zoonen, 2006: 127). I conducted interviews to enhance my understanding of the Walt Disney Company’s merchandising and marketing processes. The interviews provided me with in depth accounts of product design and marketing processes, as well as supplementary information about the Princesses to build on the film and merchandising facets. This provided
me with an industrial understanding of merchandising processes, which resulted in a deeper analysis and understanding of the merchandising facet.

Although I am a consumer of Disney products, I had no understanding of how these products were created or marketed, and there is little information publicly available. Interviews provided me with an invaluable understanding of how the merchandising and marketing of the Princesses within the Walt Disney Company operated. This understanding contributed to the institutional approach I used to understand the context in which the Princesses are produced, deepening the analysis of each facet. The addition of interviews to exploring the facet of merchandising and marketing provided essential industry knowledge on how the Princess Phenomenon is delivered to consumers. Whilst interviews were not as heavily featured as other methods in this facet, they provided a new way of seeing the existing phenomenon (Mason, 2011: 82) through contextualising the merchandising and marketing processes for the Disney Princess brand. Facet methodology facilitated this due to the different range of methods that can be used to explore different facets (Mason, 2011: 79). It illuminated an industrial understanding of merchandise through ‘strategically and artfully selected sets of questions, puzzles and problematics’ (Mason, 2011: 79), whilst being clustered with content analysis to examine the outcome of these strategies, helping us to see the Princess Phenomenon in a new way.

**Facet three: Images of femininity in Disney Princess consumer experiences**

The third facet of the Princess Phenomenon is consumer experiences in Disney theme parks, a new addition for feminist media studies. This is where consumers can meet their favourite Princesses in ‘real life’ and is a way for them to actively engage with princesses. For Disney, this is another way to remediate and commodify the Princesses. To provide a true-to-life experience of a visit, I conducted an autoethnography at Walt Disney World, Orlando. As I had already explored the images of femininity presented by the Princesses in their films, I wanted to examine whether these behaviours and images were reflected by their representations at the parks, as this is where consumers are physically able to interact with their favourite characters. My experience at Walt Disney World (where you can meet all the officially franchised, and some non-franchised Princesses) provided an opportunity for me to analyse the choices made by the Walt Disney Company in relation to character availability, which can affect which Princesses are ‘seen’ and which are not.

Jimmie Manning and Tony Adams define autoethnography as:

> The researcher’s personal experience (auto) as it is embedded within, and informed by, cultural identities and contexts (ethno) and as it is expressed through writing, performance, or other creative means (graphy) (2015:188).

Unlike other ethnographies that are used in feminist media studies (Gajala, 2004; Gray, 1992, 2009; Hobson, 1982; Parameswaran, 2001), autoethnography is an individual, personal experience where the researcher not only records their observations about a cultural phenomenon, but also their own personal feelings and influences. It is a continual movement between ‘experiencing and examining a vulnerable self and observing and revealing the broader context of that experience’ (Ellis, 2007:14), creating a critical narrative for the reader (McIlveen, 2008). During my time at the parks, I used autoethnography to explore my personal experience, as it allows researchers to create a ‘layered account’, where researchers produce a stream of consciousness about how we view and reside in the world (Ronai, 1995:395). This allowed me to create innovative ‘flashes of insight’ (Mason, 2011: 82) that would entwine each of the previous facets to make observations about the Princess Phenomenon. I already understood images of femininity within the films (facet one), and how they are reproduced and dominant through merchandise (facet two). The third facet would connect its predecessors further, as consumers can physically meet princesses in films (therefore, do these consumer experiences redress or reinforce the images of femininity identified in the films?) and purchase as merchandise (does the availability of these consumer experiences reflect the dominant waves of princesses in merchandise?). In this final cluster of research methods, facet methodology enabled me to see different connections between all three facets to highlight not only the complexity of the phenomenon, but also the convergence of princess mediations.

Autoethnography made me aware of my own perceptions of the world, and how they are influenced (Boyln, 2008: 415). Disney and the Disney Princesses have been part of both my research career and personal life. Taking an autoethnographic approach allowed me to use my own experiences to understand this phenomenon and relay it to others (Méndez, 2013: 280). This multiple consciousness provides a ‘critical and self-reflective gaze’ that offers a personal, yet analytical experience of the Disney Parks (Boyln, 2008: 428).

Currently, there is one research paper that has used autoethnography in relation to Princesses at Walt Disney World. Sherriene Shuler (2015) provides an autoethnographic account of motherhood and Princess culture. Part of this account watches Shuler’s daughter’s experiences at the park through her mother’s eyes and does not focus heavily on character experiences. I reflect a more detailed account of guest experiences at Walt Disney World, but from an adult’s perspective, narrating my experiences and reflections when meeting each Disney Princess at Walt Disney World. This allowed me to understand how the princesses were represented at the parks, and which images of femininity were
most dominant within my interactions with the princesses. I was also able to identify popular princess costumes (and therefore the dominance of certain images of femininity)—this allowed me to connect all three of my facets to demonstrate the convergence of mediations in the Disney Princess Phenomenon.

Autoethnographies have been used in critical examinations of popular culture (Adams, 2013; Boylorn, 2008; Herrmann, 2013; Manning, 2012). Herrmann argues, ‘popular culture helps us define who we are, what we believe, and influences whom we befriend’, and in turn our identity and our ability to identify with certain elements of popular culture (such as the Disney Princess Phenomenon) ‘assist in our creation of the self’ (2013: 7). Because it is a personal piece of research, often in the form of a ‘diary’, it allows the researcher to create more ‘accessible and relatable research’ (Manning and Adams, 2015: 203–4). Therefore, this is a new and creative way to explore the Princess Phenomenon from a feminist media studies perspective.

Autoethnography is an innovative method that provides a unique viewpoint of a phenomenon that can be supported through other methods. As such a personal approach, autoethnography allows me to consider my own relationship between my observations of the phenomenon and the construction of my social reality. I would also argue that autoethnography is a tool that will enhance feminist media studies further, many of us are inherently connected to our research, and autoethnography is a rigorous way to acknowledge this. This enables me to explore the meaning making in ‘everyday life’ (van Zoonen, 2006:135) of Princess culture. Whilst visiting Walt Disney World is not a feature of everyday life for consumers, participating in Princess culture and making meaning from experiences within Princess culture is. Facet methodology creates a unique and accessible flash of insight to another facet of the Princess Phenomenon that is underresearched and provides more rich textual data to think about the whole phenomenon. For feminist media studies, the combinations that facet methodology encourages and enables illuminates the deep connections between the different forms of media that commodify the Princess Phenomenon, which through exploration with traditional methods (textual analysis, content analysis and participant observation separately) would remain hidden.

**Conclusion**

In this article I introduce the examination of the Disney Princess Phenomenon as a way of carrying facet methodology and feminist media studies forward, explaining how it informs my methodological approach to studying the Princesses in a much-needed wider context. I have argued that facet methodology provides insights we otherwise would not discover due to its holistic approach. It allows me to be playful and creative throughout my research (Mason, 2011: 76) and illuminates how each facet of the Princess Phenomenon is intertwined, providing a more holistic understanding of the worldwide cultural phenomenon. It allows researchers to explore shifting and complex phenomenon within feminist media studies and media and communication. I identify three ‘research problematics’ (Mason, 2011: 76): the image of femininity in Princess films, merchandising and marketing, and consumer experiences, explaining and reflecting on the research methods used to explore each facet.

The first facet consists of a foundational thick description of the images of femininity in the Disney Princess Phenomenon, a vital update to the analysis of Disney Princesses. The second facet uses a combination of content analysis and interviews to explore which Princesses (and therefore which dominant models of femininity) are marketed the most in Disney merchandising and marketing. The combination of content analysis and interviews provides a holistic understanding of the marketing of the brand from concept to the end products. Through this I was able to see how certain images of femininity are more dominantly marketed than others, which impacts the consumer choices of young consumers. Finally, I explore whether these dominant models of femininity are also reflected in Disney Parks consumer experiences with Princesses through autoethnography. I was able to directly observe how Princess experiences shape understanding of identity and gender, and whether they were reflecting the five models I previously identified. These creatively combined research methods provide an innovative, in-depth textual and empirical understanding of the role of femininity within the different facets of the Princess Phenomenon. They demonstrate new and creative ways to explore not only ‘traditional’ forms of media such as films, but also how these forms of media are commodified and remediated through merchandising and consumer experiences. The use of facet methodology demonstrates the deep connection between the three facets, which otherwise remains hidden. Whilst traditional methods used in feminist media studies could have been applied separately, Mason’s analogy of a diamond gemstone continually encourages the researcher to use these methods in combination to explore and highlight how each facet is deeply connected. It encouraged me to creatively examine newer forms of media.

Separately, these facets produce an insight to each element of the phenomenon (Mason, 2011: 80). Together, each of these facets produce a holistic understanding of the Princess Phenomenon. Whilst each of these facets could arguably be a project of their own, facet methodology allowed me to add significant and in-depth intersections of analysis to the whole phenomenon, rather than analysing them separately. This allowed me to understand how the entwining of each facet of the Disney Princess Phenomenon impacts and nourishes the other. Facet methodology provided me with the flexibility to explore different areas of the phenomenon with diverse research methods, whilst maintaining feminist media studies theoretical underpinnings to...
explore how femininity was being reinforced. Each facet of the Princess Phenomenon gemstone was ‘capable of casting and refracting light in a variety of ways that help define the overall object of concern’ (Mason, 2011: 77): how the image of femininity is produced and reinforced throughout the phenomenon.

Whilst other research methods such as bricolage and mixed methods may also be considered by feminist media scholars, they are not able to fully encapsulate the holistic nature of complex cultural phenomenon. Facet methodology moves beyond traditional ways of research, constantly encouraging the researcher to imagine their subject as a gemstone, and how each identified facet intertwines and refracts light and information differently. It answers Savage and Burrows (2007) call for researchers to use new research methods and data by allowing researchers to creatively design the research for each facet to illuminate different parts of the gemstone. For feminist media studies, this is especially imperative to build on calls for ‘more nuanced and multifaceted understandings’ (Carter et al., 2013: 1) and ‘new and creative methods of data gathering’ (van Zoonen, 2006: 128). Facet methodology encourages us to see things in a different, refracted light, to use an interdisciplinary approach, and to be epistemologically open (Mason, 2011: 85). As media continues to converge, and cultural phenomenon such as Disney Princesses are remediated and commodified through wider forms of media such as merchandise and theme park experiences, we can turn to facet methodology to give us a creative and rigorous opportunity to explore the phenomenon further than we have before.

Consequently, I argue that this methodology has much wider implications for creative research within feminist media studies and media and communications. Whilst the Disney Princess Phenomenon can be considered as a ‘gemstone’ in itself, it can also be situated as a facet within the wider ‘gemstone’ of feminist explorations of popular culture. Facet methodology has the ability connect a diverse range of feminist media scholarship within the field as well as through other areas of media and communications. The princess ‘gemstone’ could also be a facet of a wider Disney studies ‘gemstone’, or a media convergence ‘gemstone’. Facet methodology enables researchers to connect their work to much wider ‘gemstones’ across a range of interdisciplinary fields. I argue that facet methodology has the potential to be used in a range of fields to further encourage interdisciplinary work.

Whilst there has been very little analysis of the advancement of facet methodology in the methods field, this article calls for more scholars to consider its use, especially in feminist media studies and media and communications more widely. Facet methodology provided me with an innovative and exciting ‘way forward in the contemporary research context’ (Mason, 2011:85), as Jennifer Mason hoped. I used a range of diverse and innovative methods in combination with each other to holistically explore a complex cultural phenomenon. Like Mason, I hope the sharing of different approaches and uses of facet methodology encourages other scholars to continue exploring innovative ways to critically examine complex phenomenon.

Declaration of conflicting interests
The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding
The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD
Robyn Muir https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2280-6577

Notes
1. By franchised princesses I am referring to princesses included within the official ‘Disney Princess Franchise’. These princesses are featured on merchandise and marketing together, rather than being marketed separately. Franchised princesses include: Snow White (1937), Cinderella (1950), Aurora (1959), Ariel (1989), Belle (1992), Jasmine (1993), Pocahontas (1995), Mulan (1998), Tiana (2009), Rapunzel (2010), and Merida (2012). Non-franchised princesses are characters that are royal, and often have the title princess (in one way or another) but are not included in the Disney Princess Franchise. These characters are Eilonwy (1985), Kida (2001), Anna and Elsa (2013 and 2019), Moana (2016), Raya and Namaari (2021) Please see the bibliography for their respective films.
2. For Mason’s discussion of bricolage and integrated mixed methods, please see Mason (2011). For a more in-depth explanation of bricolage, see Kincheloe (2001) and Kincheloe and Berry (2004). For a more in-depth explanation on integrated mixed methods, please see Brannen (2005) and Mason (2006).
3. There is a growing trend in non-licenced Disney Princess Parties, where actresses dress up as the Princesses for children’s parties. However, none of these businesses are licenced or controlled by Disney themselves.
4. Please see England et al. (2011) and Mollet (2020) for the most recent in-depth analysis of Disney Princess films.
5. I have future plans to include Raya and Namaari from Raya and the Last Dragon (2021).
6. Although Auster and Mansbach (2012) focussed on Disney products, their analysis examined the appearance and appeal of toys for boys and girls. Rather than focussing on Disney Princesses, they examined a range of toys across the US Disney Store website.
7. It would have been very interesting to draw comparisons between princesses and princes, however it was beyond the scope of this current research.
8. It is important to note, that my interviewees were no longer employees of the Walt Disney Company, and therefore they could only speak to their experiences at the time of their employment. Nevertheless, these interviews provided a unique insight to merchandising and marketing.
References

Adams T (2013) Narrating the Closet: An Autoethnography of Same-Sex Attraction. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Alhayek K (2017) Emotional realism, affective labor, and politics in the Arab fandom of Game of Thrones. Journal of International Communication 11: 3740–3763.

Ang I (1985) Watching Dallas: Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination. London and New York: Methuen.

Arthurs J (2003) Sex and the city and consumer culture: Remediating postfeminist drama. Feminist Media Studies 3(1): 83–98.

Arthurs J (2004) Television and Sexuality: Regulation and the Politics of Taste. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Auster CJ and Mansbach CS (2012) The gender marketing of Toys: An Analysis of color and type of toy on the Disney Store website. Sex Roles 67: 375–388.

Bachmann I, Harp D and Loke J (2018) Through a feminist kaleidoscope: Critiquing media, power, and gender inequalities. In: Harp D, Loke J and Bachmann I (eds) Feminist Approaches to Media Theory and Research. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.1–15.

Bacon-Smith C (1992) Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the Creation of Popular Myth. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Ballaster R, Beetham M, Frazer E, et al. (1991) Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the Creation of Popular Myth. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Banet-Weiser S (2004) Girls Rule!: Gender, feminism, and Nickelodeon. Critical Studies in Media Communication 21(2): 119–139.

Basu S (2001) The blunt Cutting-Edge: The construction of sexuality in the Bengali Feminist Magazine Sananda. Feminist Media Studies 1(2): 179–196.

Bathla S (2004) Gender construction in the media: A Study of two Indian women politicians. Asian Journal of Women’s Studies 10(3): 7–34.

Beetham M (1996) A Magazine of Her Own? Domesticity and Desire in the Woman’s Magazine, 1800-1914. London and New York: Routledge.

Booth P and Williams R (eds) (2021) A Fan Studies Primer: Method, Ethics, Research. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.

Boylorn RM (2008) As Seen on TV: An autoethnographic reflection on race and reality television. Critical Studies in Media Communication 25(4): 413–433.

Brannen J (2005) Mixed Methods Research: A Discussion Paper. NCRM Methods Review Paper 005. Available at: http://eprints.ncl.ac.uk/89/1/MethodsReviewPaperNCRM-005.pdf (accessed 6 August 2021).

Brough MM and Shresthova S (2012) Fandom meets Activism: Rethinking Civic and Political Participation. Transformative Works and Cultures 10. DOI: 10.3983/twc.2012.0303

Brown ME (1994) Soap Opera and Women’s Talk Thousand Oaks and. London: SAGE.

Brusdon C (2000) The Feminist, the Housewife and the Soap. Oxford, Opera: Clarendon.

Bryman A (1995) Disney and His Worlds. London: Routledge.

Bryman A (2010) The Disneyization of Society. London: SAGE Publications. Available at: http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nottingham/detail.action?docID=254754 (accessed 25 August 2020).

Carter C and Steiner L (2003) Critical Readings: Media and Gender. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Carter C, Steiner L and McLaughlin L (2013) The Routledge Companion to Media and Gender. Abingdon: Routledge.

Cavanagh S (1997) Content analysis: Concepts, methods and applications. Nurse Researcher 4: 5–13.

Click MA and Kramer MW (2007) Reflections on a century of living: Gendered differences in mainstream popular songs. Popular Communication 5(4): 241–262.

Conn C (2015) ‘Sensory highs’, ‘vivid rememberings’ and ‘interactive stunning’: Children’s play cultures and experiences of friendship in autistic autobiographies. Disability & Society 30(8): 1192–1206.

Coulter N (2014) Tweening the Girl: The Crystallization of the Tween Market. New York: Peter Lang.

Coulter N and Moruzi K (2020) Woke Girls: From the girl’s realm to Teen Vogue. Feminist Media Studies. 1–15. DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2020.1736119

Courtney A and Whipple T (1983) Sex Stereotyping in Advertising. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Coward R (1982) Sexual violence and sexuality. Feminist Review 11(11): 9–22.

Craven A (2002) Beauty and the Belles: Discourses of feminism and femininity in Disneyland. European Journal of Women’s Studies 9(2): 123–142.

Currie D (1999) Girl Talk: Adolescent Magazines and Their Readers. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press.

Davies K and Heaphy B (2011) Interactions that matter: Researching critical associations. Methodological Innovations Online 6(3): 5–16.

Davis A (2006) Good Girls and Wicked Witches: Women in Disney’s Feature Animation. Eastleigh: John Libbey.

Davis MM (2014) From snow to ice: A study of the progression of Disney princesses from 1937 to 2014. Film Matters 5(2): 48–52.

Do Rozario RAC (2004) The princess and the magic kingdom: Beyond nostalgia, the function of the Disney princess. Women’s Studies in Communication 27(1): 34–59.

Duffy BE (2010) Empowerment through endorsement? Polysemic meaning in Dove’s user-generated advertising. Communication Culture & Critique 3(1): 26–43.

Dundes L (2001) Disney’s modern heroine Pocahontas: Revealing age-old gender stereotypes and role discontinuity under a façade of liberation. The Social Science Journal 38(3): 353–365.

Dworkin A (1980) Pornography and grief. In: Lederer L (ed.) Take Pocahontas: Synthetic miscegenation and Disney’s multiculturalism. Narrative 7(2): 147–168.
Towbin MA, Haddock SA, Zimmerman TS, et al. (2004) Images of gender, race, age, and sexual orientation in Disney feature-length animated films. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy* 15(4): 19–44.

Tuchman G (1978) Introduction: The Symbolic Annihilation of women by the mass media. In: Tuchman G, Daniels A. Kaplan and Benét J. (eds) *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 3–38.

Tuchman G (1979) Women’s depiction by the mass media. *Signs* 4(3): 528–542.

Tuchman G, Kaplan Daniels A and Benét J (1978) *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Vance C (ed.) (1984) *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*. Boston, MA: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

van Zoonen L (1998) One of the girls? The changing gender of Journalism. In: Carter C, Branston G and Allen S (eds) *News, Gender and Power*. London: Routledge, pp.33–46.

van Zoonen L (2006) *Feminist Media Studies*. London: SAGE.

Vares T (2002) Framing ‘Killer Women’ films: Audience Use of genre. *Feminist Media Studies* 2(2): 213–229.

Whelan B (2012) Power to the princess: Disney and the creation of the 20th century princess narrative. *Interdisciplinary Humanities* 29(1): 21–34.

Whelan I (2000) *Overloaded: Popular Culture and the Future of Feminism*. London: The Women’s Press.

Williams R (2020) *Theme Park Fandom: Spatial Transmedia, Materiality and Participatory Cultures*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Wohlwend KE (2009) Damsels in discourse: Girls consuming and producing identity texts through Disney princess play. *Reading Research Quarterly* 44(1): 57–83.

Zarranz L (2007) Diswomen strike back? The evolution of Disney’s Femmes in the 1990. *Atenea* 27(2): 55–65.

Zsubori A (2022) ‘They’ are not like [. . .] Pamela Hódi [. . .] constantly showing Off’—How Hungarian tweens negotiate fame through Disney Princesses. *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* 13: 211–229.

**Filmography**

*Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* (1937) Directed by Ben Sharpsteen [Film] USA: RKO Radio Pictures

*Cinderella* (1950) Directed by Clyde Geronimi, Hamilton Luske and Wilfred Jackson [Film] USA: RKO Radio Pictures, Inc.

*Sleeping Beauty* (1959) Directed by Clyde Geronimi, Les Clark, Eric Larson and Wolfgang Reitherman [Film] USA: Buena Vista Distribution

*The Black Cauldron* (1985) Directed by Ted Berman and Richard Rich [Film] USA: Buena Vista Distribution

*The Little Mermaid* (1989) Directed by Ron Clements and John Musker [Film] USA: Buena Vista Pictures

*Beauty and the Beast* (1991) Directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise [Film] USA: Buena Vista Pictures

*Aladdin* (1992) Directed by Ron Clements and John Musker [Film] USA: Buena Vista Pictures

*Pocahontas* (1995) Directed by Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg [Film] USA: Buena Vista Pictures

*Mulan* (1998) Directed by Tony Bancroft and Barry Cook [Film] USA: Buena Vista Pictures

*Atlantis: The Lost Empire* (2001) Directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise [Film] USA: Buena Vista Pictures

*The Princess and the Frog* (2009) Directed by Ron Clements and John Musker [Film] USA: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures

*Tangled* (2010) Directed by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard [Film] USA: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures

*Brave* (2012) Directed by Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman [Film] USA: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures

*Frozen* (2013) Directed by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee [Film] USA: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures

*Moana* (2016) Directed by Ron Clements and John Musker [Film] USA: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures

*Frozen II* (2019) Directed by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee [Film] USA: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures

*Raya and the Last Dragon* (2021) Directed by Don Hall and Carlos López Estrada [Film] USA: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures