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Exploring Societal Fears of Aging and Loss of Beauty in Disney Film "Tangled" and Indian Film "Yashoda": A Feminist Film Analysis

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Abstract

The fear of aging and the loss of beauty is a pervasive societal issue that transcends cultural boundaries, often manifesting in the media and film industry. This paper examines the 2010 animated film "Tangled" and an Indian Film "Yashoda" (2022) through a feminist lens, focusing on the themes of fears of aging and loss of beauty. It analyses how the antagonists, Gothel (Tangled) and Madhubala (Yashoda) navigate their journey in maintaining their beauty and youth which is a stereotypical expectation of the society. This study examines the portrayal of societal fears regarding aging and the loss of beauty through a feminist lens in the Disney film "Tangled" and the Indian film "Yashoda." Both films, while culturally distinct, navigate the complex terrain of beauty standards, aging, and female autonomy. "Tangled" presents the narrative of Rapunzel, whose magical hair symbolizes youth and beauty, coveted by the antagonist, Mother Gothel, to prevent her own aging. This dynamic serves as a metaphor for the societal obsession with youth and the lengths to which individuals will go to preserve beauty.

The paper employs a feminist film analysis methodology to uncover how these narratives contribute to and critique the cultural discourse on aging and beauty. It investigates how the films' portrayal of female villains against the backdrop of societal beauty standards speaks to larger themes of female agency, body autonomy, and the commodification of women's bodies. By comparing the Western and Indian cinematic contexts, the study reveals the universal and culturally specific aspects of how women's aging and beauty are depicted and the implications of these portrayals for feminist discourse. This analysis contributes to a broader understanding of how cinema reflects, reinforces, and challenges the societal fears of aging and loss of beauty.

Keywords

Film; Aging; Beauty; Disney Films; Indian Films; Female Agency; Body Autonomy; Western Cinema; Societal Construction; Aging Narratives

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Исследование социальных страхов старения и утраты красоты в фильмах Дисней «Рапунцель: Запутанная история» и индийском фильме «Яшода»: феминистский анализ фильмов

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Аннотация

Страх перед старением и потерей красоты — это повсеместная социальная проблема, которая преодолевает культурные границы и часто проявляется в медиа и киноиндустрии. В данной работе рассматриваются анимационный фильм Disney «Рапунцель: Запутанная история» (2010) и индийский фильм «Яшода» (2022) через феминистскую призму, сосредоточивая внимание на темах страха старения и утраты красоты. Анализируются действия антагонистов — Готель («Рапунцель: Запутанная история») и Мадхубалы («Яшода»), которые стремятся сохранить свою красоту и молодость, что отражает стереотипные ожидания общества. Исследование изучает изображение социальных страхов по поводу старения и утраты красоты в диснеевском фильме и индийском фильме, предлагая феминистскую интерпретацию. Оба фильма, несмотря на культурные различия, затрагивают сложные вопросы стандартов красоты, старения и женской автономии. В «Рапунцель» магические волосы главной героини символизируют молодость и красоту, к которым стремится антагонистка, Мать Готель, чтобы остановить собственное старение. Этот сюжет служит метафорой общественной одержимости молодостью и стремления людей сохранить красоту любой ценой.

В работе используется метод феминистского анализа фильмов, чтобы раскрыть, как данные повествования поддерживают или критикуют культурные дискурсы о старении и красоте. Исследование анализирует, как изображение женских злодеек на фоне общественных стандартов красоты затрагивает темы женской самостоятельности, телесной автономии и коммерциализации женских тел. Сравнивая западный и индийский кинематографические контексты, исследование выявляет универсальные и культурно специфические аспекты изображения старения и красоты женщин, а также значение этих образов для феминистской теории. Данный анализ способствует более глубокому пониманию того, как кино отражает, поддерживает и бросает вызов общественным страхам перед старением и утратой красоты.

Ключевые слова

кино; старение; красота; фильмы Disney; индийские фильмы; женская автономия; телесная автономия; западное кино; общественные конструкты; нарративы о старении

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Introduction

This paper delves into the representation of these fears through a feminist film analysis of the Disney movie "Tangled" and the Indian film "Yashoda." Both films, while rooted in different cultural contexts, provide a rich tapestry for exploring how narratives of aging and beauty are constructed and the impact they have on societal perceptions of women. The obsession with youthfulness goes beyond rejecting femininity; it's a rejection of women's very humanity and their entitlement to age naturally. Women are seen going to great lengths to prevent wrinkles, consciously avoiding expressive facial movements—be it furrowing their brows, narrowing their eyes, or even laughing heartily, all to evade the telltale signs of aging like forehead creases, crow's feet, and laugh lines. This phenomenon is a stark reflection of a deeper societal problem where women are compelled to suppress their emotions, all to adhere to an aesthetic that pleases the observer, highlighting a troubling trend where appearance is prioritized over authentic emotional expression.

> During the 1970s, feminists voiced their criticism towards prevalent beauty routines, including activities like as dieting and depilation. However, during the past two decades, the severity of Western beauty procedures has escalated significantly. Contemporary medical procedures sometimes need the occurrence of skin lacerations, blood spillage, and the manipulation or removal of body parts. (Jeffreys, 2015).

The societal emphasis on youthful appearance, particularly among women, has been emphasized. The television commercials and magazine adverts prominently feature a multitude of sales pertaining to diet products and creams designed to promote a more youthful complexion. Scholars have been investigating the impact of societal representations on body image. Lewis and Cachelin (2001) conducted a study examining the patterns of body image, dissatisfaction, and eating attitudes among adult and elderly women. Their findings revealed a significant association between the dread of aging and the desire for thinness, body dissatisfaction, and disinhibited eating. Society is shaped by the collective adherence to social standards and the influence of stereotypes. However, women are disproportionately impacted by societal stereotypes and standards as compared to men. Throughout history, women have endured the burdens of depression, oppression, misrepresentation, and judgments. The media has a significant role in perpetuating a continuous cycle of gender issues, such as sexism, lack of representation for women, gender discrimination, and gender division. This is primarily due to its consistent portrayal of negative and conservative statements, images, and gendered messages that target women.

Literature Review

The study of feminist film theory focuses on how gender is portrayed in movies and how they either uphold or subvert gender stereotypes and societal

conventions. It began in the late 1960s and early 1970s and developed as a result of the influence of several feminist movements and scholarly works, particularly second-wave feminism. The idea of the masculine gaze, first presented by Laura Mulvey in her influential essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in 1975, is a key component of feminist cinema theory. Mulvey maintained that women are portrayed in mainstream movies as objects of male desire and pleasure because they are made with males as center of focus. Three views are included in the male gaze: the viewpoint of the guy behind the camera, the viewpoint of the characters in the story, and the viewpoint of the audience member. This idea shed light on the ways in which editing and camera angles in films contribute to the objectification and sexualization of women.

In addition, feminist film theory addresses how women's voices and experiences are portrayed in movies. It examines how women's experiences are frequently ignored or presented from a male viewpoint, and it criticizes the dearth of female leads and filmmakers in the motion picture business. To illustrate the gender differences in cinema content, the Bechdel Test, for example, was developed as a straightforward method of assessing the inclusion of female characters and their interactions with one another in conversations unrelated to men.

The theory has developed to take intersectional viewpoints into account, acknowledging that women's experiences in movies are influenced by a variety of factors, including race, class, sexual orientation, and gender. This change has prompted more in-depth examinations of the ways in which various types of oppression interact in film depictions. Furthermore, feminist film theory looks at how female directors have questioned conventional narrative and artistic conventions. It honors the rise of the female gaze, in which women are shown as active subjects rather than passive objects and as the authors of their own narratives.

Feminist film theory is still growing in study today, embracing topics like global cinema, genre, and spectatorship. It investigates the representation of women in various genres of film, ranging from science fiction to horror, and looks at the worldwide dynamics of gender in the creation, distribution, and reception of films. In general, feminist film theory is an ever-evolving area that aims to comprehend and analyze the nuanced ways that gendered identities and power relations are reflected, constructed, and challenged in cinema. It advances an inclusive and diverse representation of women's experiences and viewpoints in film.

The media cultivates a culture that rejects and mistrusts everyone who is older by consistently portraying aging negatively. (Perry, 1999). Women typically begin to experience aging by the time they are 50 years old, internalizing the culture's rejection of and dislike for aging, perceiving it as a process of decline rather than development and transformation (Woodwind, 1999). The concept of female attractiveness has historically been linked to youthfulness, whereas older women have been characterized in derogatory terms such as "menopausal" and



"post-menopausal". Consequently, the effects of aging have been seen to impact women at an earlier stage compared to men (Elnahla, 2015).

> The representation of women in visual media continues to ignite quite a considerable amount of debate and scholarly investigation across the globe. It has been argued that cinema, in particular, has made no genuine effort to project the position of women in a positive and systematic manner (Smith, 2015).

The study of age is a relatively new emerging area within the realms of social sciences and humanities. The term 'ageism' was introduced in 1968 by Professor Robert Butler, a gerontologist and psychiatrist. He was the first clinician to identify the language, attitudes, and confusion of aging with disease as factors that contribute to the mistreatment of older individuals. Feminist age studies seek to distinguish between the physical realities of women and the repetitive and restrictive social norms that restrict women from fully participating in society. Simone de Beauvoir's seminal work, Coming of Age (1973), emerged during the early stages of second-wave feminism. In this work, de Beauvoir directed her focus towards the intricate dynamics that contribute to the (in)visibility of women in their later years. She employed similar conceptual frameworks to examine the material circumstances and cultural narratives that shape the portrayal of old age. Margaret Morganroth Gullette (2004), a feminist scholar, argues that age ideology places significant emphasis on bodily biological age as the fundamental aspect of 'feminine' identity. This perpetuates a narrative of decline for older women and encourages them to adopt younger appearances, which is a form of identity stripping that must be actively opposed at all levels.

Robert Butler explained the systematic categorization and prejudice against individuals based on their age, similar to how racism and sexism perpetuate such biases based on skin color and gender (Butler, 1969). Ageism, alike to racism and sexism, promotes the perception of persons not as unique individuals, but rather as belonging to a specific social category (Quadagno, 1999). As women age, they become part of the marginalized, abandoned, and unproductive groups, as described by Halberstam (2012). This transition can bring about feelings of loss and humiliation, but it also allows for a more profound understanding of patriarchal oppression that is firmly rooted in their bodies.

> Older women are complex political agents, like everybody else. Bilkis Bano or Mohinder Kaur are not shields or disarming cover stories for other 'real' activists. They are massing on the streets with the same concrete goals as their comrades. If anything unites them, it is perhaps that they know what is to be on the other side of power. And having been on a long journey to get here, they care urgently about where we're headed (Gopalakrishnan, 2020)

The concept of beauty's ultimate standard is intrinsically intertwined with the narrative constructed by the worldwide beauty industry. The global beauty business establishes a standard of beauty that influences public opinion. This is also what captivates women and drives them to pursue a specific standard (Putri, et. al,

2023). The innate human inclination towards aesthetic appeal has perpetually driven the pursuit of exquisite artifacts, although the global aspiration for personal attractiveness is currently attaining unprecedented levels. While the need for beauty is present worldwide, industry data indicates that it is more pronounced in Asia (Madan, 2018). Research on women's involvement in beauty frequently has a gendered aspect that specifically focuses on young females, simplifying women's beauty routines to issues of self-confidence, psychological well-being, and ethical principles of contemporary women and girls (Dobson, 2016).

Methodology

The study explores through the content analysis the perception of women towards beauty has not changed in media across the timelines. While *Tangled* is a movie released in the year 2010 with the western backdrop, and *Yashoda* is a movie released in 2022, with the Indian back drop still holds the similarity in dealing with the concept of beauty. It is still noticeable that how media looks at the way women's perception of beauty has not either changed or improved its way of analyzing the concept of beauty perceived by women. The paper administered a deep content analysis through analyzing the villain characters and the way they are turned into villains in the process of self-preservation. Gothel's appearance is meticulously crafted to mirror her inherent qualities. The juxtaposition of her sombre, sophisticated attire and her seemingly ageless countenance serves as a visual representation of her narcissism and duplicitous character. The tower in which Gothel confines Rapunzel serves as a potent emblem of seclusion and manipulation. It symbolizes Gothel's endeavours to confine and use the magic for her own advantage. The eventual breach of the tower represents the ultimate dismantling of Gothel's dominion. Gothel's main drive is the protection of her own well-being. She abducts Rapunzel in order to maintain her access to the enchanting abilities that preserve her youth. This self-centred need supersedes any authentic fondness she may has for Rapunzel. Her apprehension towards the process of aging and the potential loss of her physical attractiveness motivates her behaviour. This anxiety exemplifies a more profound critique of cultural expectations surrounding age and physical attractiveness.

Similarly, the portrayal of the antagonist Madhubala in the film *Yashoda* is intricately designed, and her persona is clearly delineated by her background story and deeds. During the flashback, Madhubala is portrayed as suffering from a severe illness, which greatly impacts her merciless conduct. Her opportunistic disposition is emphasized when she effortlessly transitions between romantic partners, each shift meticulously calculated to advance her aspirations. The complete lack of naturalness in the surrogacy center she manages further intensifies the film's ominous ambiance, contributing to the perception of wickedness. Madhubala is depicted as a ruthless and perilous woman, whose true motives are astonishingly unveiled as the story progresses. It has been revealed that she has

Werner's syndrome, a disorder that leads to accelerated aging and the consequent deterioration of her physical attractiveness. Her fixation on preserving her youth and physical attractiveness compels her to seek out radical methods. The remedy for her ailment lies in a pharmaceutical derived from a confidential component found in the plasma of embryos. The revelation of this fact has resulted in the utilization of surrogate mothers, as their pregnancies are essential for extracting the plasma required to produce these drugs and cosmetics. Madhubala's unwavering determination to find a remedy for her disease and her readiness to jeopardize the lives of several women highlight her malicious character. The story explores her inner thoughts and emotions, uncovering a protagonist who is motivated by a deep fear of growing old and an intense want to preserve her physical attractiveness at whatever expense. The intricate motivation enhances her character, transforming her into more than just a conventional antagonist, but rather one whose acts originate from a very personal and sad defect.

The films *Tangled* and *Yashoda* portray 'Mother Gothel' and 'Madhuabala' as initially fragile individuals who prioritize retaining their beauty to please society. However, as the story progresses, these women become into individuals who are willing to go to any lengths to preserve their beauty, even if it means harming others in the process.

Cultural Backdrop of the movie *Tangled* and *Yashoda*

The film *Tangled* is a loose adaptation of the German fairy tale *Rapunzel* by the Brothers Grimm. The Grimm brothers curated and published folklore and fairy tales during the 19th century, which exerted a substantial influence on Western narrative traditions. The backdrop of *Tangled* showcases a medieval-inspired realm characterized by castles, marketplaces, and woodlands, which accurately depict the architectural and societal framework of Europe during the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The video clearly portrays the characteristics of these eras, including monarchs, feudalism, and a strong communal spirit. The film's visual aesthetic contains motifs and features inspired by medieval and Renaissance art and architecture. The castle of the kingdom, the architectural structure of Rapunzel's tower, and the lively scenes of the marketplace evoke memories of European historical environments. The floating lantern festival depicted in the movie is influenced by diverse real-world lantern festivals, including the Loy Krathong festival in Thailand and analogous customs observed in Europe and Asia. The story is around the timeless conflict between righteousness and malevolence, a recurring motif found in various societies, but notably emphasized in Western folklore. Mother Gothel epitomizes egocentrism and duplicity, whereas Rapunzel personifies purity and the quest for veracity. The cultural backdrop of *Tangled* is intricate and diverse, encompassing elements from European folklore, historical backdrops, and modern principles. The film combines traditional components with contemporary storytelling techniques to produce a storyline that is

universally relatable to people from diverse cultures. The film explores universal themes such as personal freedom, the conflict between good and evil, and the significance of family and relationships. Additionally, it incorporates visual and cultural references that firmly establish it within the European heritage.

Indian narratives frequently delve into moral and ethical quandaries, placing great emphasis on the significance of righteousness (dharma) and moral purity. The notion of beauty in India is molded by a diverse array of cultural, historical, social, and regional factors. The concept has undergone a gradual transformation, shaped by a variety of influences spanning from ancient customs to contemporary forms of communication. The influence of Bollywood and regional film on current beauty ideals in India is significant. Actresses and performers serve as beauty symbols, exerting influence over fashion, haircuts, and cosmetics trends. The media frequently reinforces specific beauty standards, such as light complexion and slender bodies, however there is a gradual shift occurring. Indian beauty ideals have been progressively shaped by the impact of global beauty standards and goods. The Indian market has been influenced by international brands and trends, resulting in a combination of traditional and modern beauty techniques.

When examining the notion of beauty in India from a negative standpoint, it becomes apparent that there are various underlying problems associated with cultural standards, historical biases, and the impact of media. An important concern in India is the pervasive inclination towards pale skin. This form of prejudice, referred to as colorism, has its origins in the past and is sustained by cultural conventions and the portrayal of certain groups in the media. Pale complexion is frequently linked to elevated social standing, physical attractiveness, and desirability, whereas individuals with darker skin tones encounter prejudice and are considered less appealing. There is an increasing inclination towards undergoing cosmetic operations and aesthetic procedures with the goal of conforming to conventional beauty norms. This phenomenon exemplifies an unwholesome fixation on one's physical appearance and frequently disregards the fundamental matters of self-esteem and self-approval. Women, specifically, experience significant pressure to conform to stringent beauty norms. These standards frequently prioritize physical attractiveness above other qualities, resulting in the objectification and commercialization of women's bodies. Women's possibilities and self-expression can be restricted by the cultural pressure to adhere to certain norms.

The cultural context surrounding the notion of beauty in India encompasses various concerns, such as colorism, unattainable physical ideals, gender inequalities, media impact, economic exploitation, and inflexible cultural traditions. These variables collectively contribute to a limited and frequently detrimental comprehension of beauty, affecting individuals' mental health, self-esteem, and general welfare.

In *Tangled*, the story revolves around Rapunzel, a young woman with magically long hair that possesses the power to provide eternal youth. Rapunzel gets to know that she is a princess long separated from her kingdom and possessing extraordi-

narily long hair, has lived her entire life in an isolated tower, yearning to explore the outside world. Just as she begins to lose hope, Flynn Rider, an escaped convict, stumbles upon her secluded dwelling. He strikes a deal with Rapunzel, offering to guide her to witness the mysterious lanterns that light up the sky on her birthday each year, in exchange for the return of his bag filled with purloined treasures, including a glittering crown belonging to the lost princess. Together, Flynn and Rapunzel set off on an unforgettable adventure, leading to Rapunzel's discovery of her true identity. The film's antagonist, Mother Gothel, epitomizes the fear of aging as she manipulates and controls Rapunzel to sustain her own beauty and youth. This dynamic offers a lens through which one can examine Western society's obsession with youthfulness and the lengths to which it will go to preserve an ideal of beauty.

> Compared to Grimm's version of Rapunzel, Disney's 2010 Tangled shows a far more assertive character whose magical hair can be used to heal or restore youth in others. Besides sewing and baking, Rapunzel is shown reading, doing astronomy (her chameleon is named Pascal after the mathematician), painting, fighting with a frying pan, and strategically deciding to reach her goal of seeing the flying lanterns on her birthday. The film's premise is even centered around the idea that women should not spend their whole lives at home (Elnahla, 2015).

Gothel is the antagonist in the film who abducts the princess with the intention of preserving her own youth, and then raises her as her own offspring. The depiction of her includes a complexion that is deeper, hair that is curly and black, and an accent that is British. Gothel's physical appearance in the movie aligns with the portrayal of her as the villainous character (Maio, 1998). She lacks the conventional physical attributes commonly associated with beauty; instead, she possesses more defined physical features; her eyes, nose, mouth, and face exhibit sharper contours in contrast to Rapunzel's more rounded facial features. Gothel's loss of youth is depicted by her transformation into a conventional elderly woman, characterized by warts, a hunchback, wrinkled face, and long white hair. The preconceptions linked to witches encompass the characteristics associated with elderly individuals and the bodily transformations that arise from the process of aging, so reinforcing the stereotype of age discrimination. Hence, the overarching message or stereotype is that beauty is linked to youth and innocence, whereas evil is linked to age and ugliness. (Maio 1998).

Yashoda exposes a woman's greed to be beautiful, to be accepted by the society and a level a woman can go to, to preserve her beauty. This is the story of a woman who becomes a surrogate mother for economic reasons ending up finding out the truth behind the Fertility Centre run by the antagonist, 'Dr. Madhubala'. Madhubala suffers from disease that resulted in her losing her beauty and causes aging, and then a friend of hers invents a drug to cure her illness but which is only a temporary solution. She does research and finds out that placenta in the foetus is the important ingredient for the innovation of the drug. Economically poor women are hired to become surrogate mothers and after

they conceive, the women are killed in the name of c-section to retrieve the placenta. The drugs are sold to Models, Rich women and actresses and it becomes a business more than preserving one individual woman's youth.

This paper aims to analyze how *Tangled* and *Yashoda* articulate the societal fears of aging and loss of beauty, employing a feminist perspective to understand how these films negotiate the complex intersections of age, beauty, gender, and cultural identity. By examining the portrayal of female characters in these cinematic works, the study seeks to uncover the broader cultural and feminist implications of aging and beauty standards, shedding light on the universal yet distinct ways in which societies continue to navigate these deeply entrenched issues. Society often portrays aging in women negatively, influencing them to internalize these adverse perceptions, which can impact their self-esteem. However, women should embrace and take pride in their natural progression and evolution over time.

> Our fixation on looking youthful is not only a denial of womanhood but a denial of women's humanity — the right to embrace the natural development process... ...Is it ironic that this is another symptom of the same societal illness, that emotions are restrained for the sake of others' viewing pleasure? (Ashley Te, 2022)

Since the year 2010, there has been a notable growth in the number of cosmetic surgeries, with the number of treatments escalating from 14 million to 23 million. This surge exemplifies a more extensive pattern wherein women, specifically, are adopting proactive strategies to address the observable manifestations of aging using a range of surgical and non-surgical interventions. According to the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Botox continues to be the prevailing cosmetic surgery of choice among women. This desire indicates an increasing inclination towards procedures such as fillers, which effectively diminish wrinkles and offer a more youthful look. The notion of "pre-rejuvenation" has garnered attention, wherein individuals initiate cosmetic procedures at an earlier stage in order to avert or postpone the manifestation of aging indicators, as opposed to rectifying them at a later stage in life.

The adoption of a proactive approach to aging management is indicative of a notable change in cultural perspectives toward beauty and the aging process, wherein there is a growing emphasis on the importance and pursuit of preserving a youthful appearance. The increase in these procedures signifies a more extensive cultural and social phenomenon in which the visual appeal of young individuals is highly valued, and the process of aging is regarded as something to be controlled or even concealed, through improvements in medical and technology fields of cosmetic surgery.

> Questioning a woman's age is often considered a social *faux pas*, underscoring deep-seated norms and beliefs about the aging process in women... the acknowledgment or mere mention of advancing age is thought to evoke distress among many women, reflecting broader societal attitudes that equate a woman's worth with her youthfulness. (Barrett, 2005).

The prevailing belief in society is that aging is associated with a decline in sexual allure and attractiveness. This concept also applies to assumptions regarding the decline in health and the development of detrimental characteristics as individuals get older. Film studies has widely examined the themes of aging and attractiveness, particularly in relation to female characters. There exists a notable emphasis on the representation of older women in films, and the extent to which these depictions contribute to the reinforcement or subversion of cultural norms and ideals of beauty. For instance, older people on prime-time television are frequently shown as being more obstinate, quirky, and stupid than younger ones (Bell, 1992). Ageism and sexism are prevalent prejudices that are frequently depicted in media portrayals, wherein older adults are generally portrayed as exhibiting greater stubbornness, eccentricity, and intellectual inferiority compared to their younger counterparts. An exemplary instance from mainstream media is the portrayal of Gothel in the Disney film *Tangled*, who is depicted as haughty, self-centred, and obstinate, in sharp juxtaposition to the youthful and lively Rapunzel, who epitomizes forgiveness, simplicity, and enjoyment. Gothel, in her role as the adversary, epitomizes the extreme measures that individuals are willing to go in order to safeguard their youth.

> In her autobiography *Under My Skin* (1994), Doris Lessing throws light on the unspoken communication that occurs when an old woman places pictures of herself as a younger woman in a prominent place where visitors can see them ...Lessing's account of the old woman's rejection of her age-altered appearance reveals not only how sexageism wounds women in later life but also how individual anxieties about aging are embedded in the larger cultural devaluation of the bodies and identities of aging and older women (Bouson, 2016).

The preservation of a young appearance among women is influenced by a multifaceted interaction of social, psychological, cultural, and evolutionary elements. The societal assessment of youth frequently associates it with vigor, well-being, and attractiveness, fueling an unwavering quest for youthfulness. For certain individuals, striving to maintain a young appearance provides a feeling of strength and autonomy, since it enables them to exert influence over the process of aging. The beauty and fashion sectors exploit and sustain these perspectives, actively promoting anti-aging merchandise and supporting the belief that youthfulness is both desirable and attainable. The aforementioned commercial influence serves to reinforce the inclination towards youth within societal and individual awareness, hence perpetuating the continuous cycle of age-related prejudices and beauty ideals.

> The new language that penetrated feminist thinking from the pervasive rightwing rhetoric was that of "agency", "choice" and "empowerment". Women became transformed into knowledgeable consumers who could exercise their power of choice in the market. They could pick and choose from practices and products. Feminists who continued to argue that women's choices were severely constrained and made within a context of women's relative powerlessness and male dominance were

> criticized with some acerbity as "victim feminists"; that is, making women into victims by denying their agency (Jeffreys, S. 2015).

Disney movies are frequently captivating by its bewitching images and appealing depiction of characters, wherein beauty and aesthetics assume significant roles. Disney frequently incorporates visually stunning elements in its films, and *Tangled* is no different. Rapunzel, characterized as the "most lovely child under the sun," shares similarities with other princesses.

> Disney animated films have to consider a new way of representing females and at the same time focus more on the female representation context. All aspects like beauty and appearance are integral in teaching the younger generation about complex constructs like the issue of women's representation and gender roles. Making these rules more male-dominated is a concept that needs to be corrected, primarily when focusing on the stereotypical negative impacts of female leadership roles, for example, extreme levels of violence and consistent lack of self-control, which are being disseminated and consumed as entertainment for children (Sharik, 2022).

The story primarily emphasizes Rapunzel's physical features, such as her long hair that is described as "fine as spun gold" and her "sweet voice" (Grimm 2020). It is evident that a woman's accomplishment is not influenced by her age, even though Gothel was not depicted as accomplishing anything because of her youth. Instead of using her evident magical talents to harm Rapunzel, Mother Gothel opts to psychologically torment her, making her an intriguing enemy. Through her use of subtle aggression, she manipulates Rapunzel into thinking that she is solely responsible for everything that happens. Undoubtedly, Mother Gothel in "*Tangled*" is a self-centered woman who consistently reminds Rapunzel that the external world is perilous, "intolerant of happiness and joy and will annihilate any ray of sunlight it encounters," thus urging her to consistently remain within the tower (Greno and Howard, 2010). Although women are typically associated with being preoccupied with their appearance, men also exhibit concern for their physical appearance and attractiveness. As an illustration, upon encountering his desired deceased or living poster, Flynn Rider's response was, "Oh, no! No! No! No! No, no! No! No! Oh, no! No, no, no, no, no, no! No! No, no, no, no, no, no, no! This is bad! This is very, very bad! This is really bad! [pause] They just can't get my nose right!" (Greno & Howard, 2010).

Rapunzel is frequently shown in a manner that accentuates her purity and attractiveness, yet her sole responsibility is to cater to Mother Gothel's needs. When mother Gothel says, "Rapunzel, look, in that mirror. You know what I see? I see a strong, confident, beautiful young lady. Oh look, you're there too!" (Greno & Howard 2010). The examination of this dynamic can be approached from the perspective of feminist psychoanalytic theory, which analyses the visual positioning and control of the female body in order to align with a patriarchal narrative.

Mother Gothel is driven by her obsession with perpetual youth rather than a desire for power or retribution. She is manipulative, pushy, passive, conceited,

and haughty, disguising her evil under the pretext of love. Furthermore, anytime Rapunzel is unhappy or sad, she frequently playfully taunts her and makes her feel guilty, declaring, "now I'm the bad guy." Gothel's role as a villain is increasingly expanded as Rapunzel gets to know Flynn Rider and starts to realize who she really is. She is so desperate to stay young for all of eternity that she will kill someone without feeling guilty. At the end, Flynn uses a piece of glass from a broken mirror to chop off Rapunzel's hair. Gothel recoils in shock as her skin wrinkles and Rapunzel's hair returns to its natural brown color. She stumbles over strands of Rapunzel's chopped hair and falls out the window, horrified by her reflection. When her cloak finally touches the ground, she quickly turns into a heap of ashes.

Yashoda is an Indian language medical thriller that explores current issues such as medical mafia and illegal surrogacy business. The antagonist in the story is not only driven by self-interest in finding a cure for her illness, but also exploits it as a business, reflecting the harsh reality of modern society. The act of transforming it into a company serves as evidence that women are susceptible to societal validation for their youth and consistently prioritize their own interests, often disregarding the presence of other individuals in society. The animated fantasy film *Tangled* portrays an antagonist who prioritizes her youth and physical attractiveness. Given its mythical nature, the magical abilities in the film are symbolically linked to a flower and the princess's hair. The visual symbolic representations of these two movies exhibit significant similarities. In the film *Tangled*, the princess is confined within a towering concealed castle, ensuring her anonymity. Conversely, in *Yashoda*, the surrogate mothers are concealed within the 'Eva' surrogate research center, situated in a remote location distant from the city. The Eva Institute is designed to mimic a seven-star deluxe luxury resort, but in reality, it functions as a jail. The writing is cleverly crafted to create a group dynamic among the ladies admitted to the institute that is reminiscent of prison inmates. Additionally, there is a scenario in which the surrogates are subjected to the oppressive influence of patriarchy.

The mothers are presented with a virtual environment that creates the illusion of being in an urban setting. In *Tangled*, Flynn Rider inadvertently enters the castle, prompting the princess to go on a quest to uncover the truth. Meanwhile, Yashoda, driven by her desire to know the truth, enters the reproductive clinic 'Eva' to acquire this knowledge and consequently, like how Flynn helps in rescue of Rapunzel, Yashoda ends up rescuing the other trapped women. Mother Gothel perishes at the conclusion by plummeting from the tower, while Dr. Madhubala also meets her demise in a like manner, also by falling from the top.

The film *Yashoda* can be examined from the perspective of postcolonial feminism, which emphasizes the intricate interplay of gender, race, and class in the exploitation of surrogate mothers. This viewpoint illuminates the exploitation of marginalized women's bodies for the advantage of the affluent, illustrating wider trends of neocolonial exploitation and oppression. The video reveals the harsh

truths of the surrogacy industry, in which women's bodies are transformed into marketable things, detached from their individuality, a notion that feminist researchers strongly criticize. The current trend of bio- medicalizing old life, which primarily examines and addresses aging from a medical perspective, diverts attention from the fundamental socioeconomic systems that contribute to inequalities faced by older individuals. This perspective on aging prioritizes medical intervention as the main method to tackle the difficulties linked to old age, thereby presenting it as a medical issue rather than a complex social one. This perspective fails to acknowledge the significant impact of social arrangements, such as the structure of healthcare systems and societal attitudes towards aging, on the creation and continuation of inequities among older people.

When the antagonist Madhubala asks, "Is the brain visible externally?" "Only the face is!" encapsulates a profound insight into her perception of beauty and intelligence. Facial beauty holds a prominent position for her, since it serves as a visible representation of the hidden thoughts and is therefore subject to both adoration and scrutiny. Firstly, individuals who aspire to appear beautiful are frequently driven by a longing to exhibit oneself in a manner that is visually appealing and agreeable to others. Beauty, in this context, is more than just physical attractiveness. It encompasses confidence, self-expression, and the manner in which an individual engages with the environment. For numerous individuals, the pursuit of beauty serves as a means to augment their self-confidence and experience a greater sense of empowerment in their everyday existence. The quest for beauty is seen in diverse activities, ranging from skincare and cosmetics to fashion and physical fitness. In a society where initial judgments typically carry weight, possessing an aesthetically pleasing appearance can create opportunities, cultivate relationships, and even influence one's career achievements. Beauty encompasses more than simply external appearance; it is a manifestation of an individual's inner vitality and enthusiasm for life. Thus, the antagonist Madhubala also says, "There are two categories. One – Those who wants to look beautiful, two – Those who want to hide their age".

The readiness to provide a foetus, which could potentially be her own offspring, demonstrates a conviction that a life devoid of beauty is not merely lessened but completely devoid of value. This indicates a fixation on outward appearance, where the want to be attractive surpasses all other factors, such as maternal instincts and the sacredness of life. Utilizing Madhu's consent to use the foetus implies a sorrowful internalization of society or personal influences, resulting in a decision that, from an external perspective, may appear unimaginable. The film depicts a society in which beauty has the utmost value, and individuals are willing to pay any cost, including sacrificing the life of an unborn child, to attain it. Madhubala says,

> In order to make me beautiful, Gautham had experimented on me for the first time... for that, he had asked for a foetus... I asked him to use my baby if needed to... a life

without beauty is worthless to me... I became beautiful by using my own baby (Foetus) (Yashoda, 2022).

The phenomenon of medicalizing old age entails a proclivity to individualize the process of aging, so implying that the challenges and inequalities experienced by older individuals are personal matters that may be addressed through medical interventions. This position shifts focus away from the necessity of tackling wider societal elements that contribute to these disparities, such as the availability of high-quality healthcare, socioeconomic standing, and the social factors that influence health outcomes. The insufficient attention given to the influence of class, colour, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation on the experiences of older adults persists. According to Hendricks (1995), the medicalization method does not address the power dynamics and systemic biases that are inherent in these categories. As a result, it perpetuates a status quo that frequently marginalizes and disadvantages older persons. The overreliance on medical interventions fails to acknowledge the significance of social interventions, policy modifications, and community support systems, which have the potential to more efficiently tackle the underlying factors contributing to inequality and enhance the overall welfare of the elderly population. The biomedicalization of old age fails to acknowledge the intricate interaction of social, economic, and cultural elements that influence the aging process. This highlights the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to comprehending and tackling the difficulties associated with old age.

Though the underlying knot of the stories is about women's greed to be young and beautiful which is the perception of the society, in reality the acceptance and recognition of the society towards women who are young leads the mental process of women for many generations, despite the culture where they come from. Concerning *Tangled*, which is a western film and *Yashoda*, being the Indian film, it is interesting to note that these films are directed by male directors. Furthermore, the representation of the aging process in these films can be subject to critical analysis via the lens of ageism and sexism in media. This analysis highlights the tendency to depict older women in stereotypical positions that perpetuate their marginalized status. This is consistent with feminist gerontology, which questions the normative standards that diminish the importance of the aging process, especially for women, and promotes a broader portrayal that embraces aging as an innate and empowering phase of life.

Conclusions

The transformation in media attention towards the process of aging has the potential to significantly impact cultural perceptions and attitudes. The influence of media in shaping public opinion and cultural standards is of utmost importance. The portrayal of aging as a largely unwanted and bad facet of life serves to perpetuate ageism and marginalize older folks. The depiction in question has

the potential to engender adverse stereotypes, prejudice, and inadequate representation for the elderly demographic, so impacting their psychological and physiological welfare.

The media can influence the perception of aging by modifying its approach, shifting the narrative from one of deterioration and deprivation to one of development, sagacity, and ongoing capacity. By endorsing aging as an inherent and favorable stage of life, the media could foster a more comprehensive and considerate mindset towards older folks. This transition has the potential to promote intergenerational unity, diminish age-related social disapproval, and emphasize the significant contributions that older individuals make to society. Furthermore, presenting aging as a productive phase of life would contribute to its normalization, enabling a more accurate and comprehensive comprehension of the human life cycle.

This has the potential to result in policy frameworks and provisions for the aging population, and increased avenues for older folks to actively participate in and make meaningful contributions to society. Consequently, this could result in a more salubrious, all-encompassing, and encouraging milieu for individuals as they grow older, so helping society at large.

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