The Linguistic Anatomy of a Villain: A Discourse of Villainy

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A DISCOURSE OF VILLAINY

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Supervisor:
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Abstract

From the beginnings of human culture to the multimedia environment in which we live today, stories have been used as powerful socializing and pedagogical tools, providing communities with clear patterns of acceptable and abhorrent behavior through their heroes and villains. For this to be effective, it was necessary to code such characters in a way that was immediately understood by the story's recipients. One such code is the characters' language and how it is used to create a cultural model of particular character types.

This thesis aims to examine the language of villains, its features and the way they interact in creating a recognizable villainous identity. To do this, a corpus of nine films produced by the Disney company in the decade between 1989 and 1999, a period known as the "Disney Renaissance" was examined. The study comprises two parts. Firstly, auditory analysis was conducted to examine one of the most salient ways in which language is manifested: the characters' accents. Secondly, discourse analysis of the main villains' language was conducted, with the intention of exploring how language is used to construct certain villainous identities, especially in regards to power or lack thereof.

It was found that negatively coded characters tend to be visually and linguistically characterized as foreign, and are therefore more likely to speak in non-American accents. Furthermore, the villains' language use revealed a dual nature with regards to power, with them presenting both a victimized and non-threatening, as well as an authoritative and powerful figure. Finally, some implications as well as potential for further research were discussed.

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Stories of heroes and villains, and what we learn from them

Various thinkers and philosophers point out different things as touchstones of humanity. Some say it to be a matter of biology; it was the ability to speak which made humans *human*, or perhaps the development of opposable thumbs. Others point to psychology; the existence of conscience and a moral code, the abilities to love and loathe, to feel and to understand those feelings in a way that animals cannot. The answer might, and for many does, lie in both – in the way our ability to speak and hold writing utensils enabled us to express our feelings – in other words, in *telling stories*. This is not simply a matter of human need for communication or entertainment. Rather, it is about constructing and reconstructing a sense of reality and identity; it is about learning from stories and teaching others through them. As Estes (2004: xxxi) points out, stories are pedagogical and socializing tools, because "the soul's way of communicating is to teach. And its language is symbols and themes, all of which have been found, since the beginning of time, in stories".

This teaching and learning aspect of storytelling is underlined here because it has persisted throughout all of story's history. While our circumstances might have changed tremendously – from huddling around a fire to listen to the village's wisest and oldest member, to sitting in front of a large screen with hundreds of strangers ready to not only listen to but also watch, and often smell, move with and in other ways experience the unfolding story – the basic idea that stories are something to *learn* from remains unchanged. The forms of the story have not changed much either, and its lessons remain most effectively told through tales of heroes and villains, who in their struggles personify the conflict of good and evil. From Perseus and Medusa, to comic book superheroes going up against alien forces, basic blueprints of conduct are provided: of what to be and what not to be, of what to do and

what not to do, as told through the story's heroes, and perhaps even more effectively, its villains.

Working off the notion that tales of heroes and villains had, and still have, an important social role "in carving out an imaginative space through which society can affirm their prosocial values" Kjeldgaard-Christiansen (2015: 1), explains how human morality essentially developed due to a need for in-group collaboration. He mentions the welfare tradeoff ratio – a measure of how much of one's welfare one is willing to trade for someone else's, that is, the willingness to put others' needs first – as an early indicator of potential villainy. Based on this, the earliest human conception of evil developed to denote behaviors which were in direct opposition to the "prosocial ethos of the group" (4), and stories developed so as to clearly mark such behaviors. Klapp (1954: 61) says that much the same principle works in the "social typing" we employ in our daily lives. Agreement on certain social types and how commendable such behaviors are serves to provide norms for emulation or avoidance, to organize and simplify the collective response to such behaviors and, ultimately, to uphold societal values.

Contemporary stories, told in new media, fulfill much the same role of defining social conventions. "Like folktales, films express taboos and help to resolve them" (Monaco, 2000: 266). With limited runtime and budgets, films and television shows – building on the stories that came before them – developed old and created new schemes of plot and character. One would assume that such schemata are applied to the characterization of good and evil characters. What are some salient features of antagonists which serve both to characterize them as villains and differentiate them from heroes, and how do these manifest in media such as film? This is the central question of the present study.

Kjeldgaard-Christiansen (2015) suggests five main predictions on villainous characterization. Firstly, they will usually display an extremely low WRT – that is,

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unwillingness to help others, and/or willingness to abuse them. Secondly, they will be shown as selfish and disposed to using others as means to an end. Thirdly, they will be presented as disgusting, in terms of their moral actions, but also frequently in their appearance as well. Numerous studies, in fact, show a basic human tendency to associate beauty with goodness and ugliness with evil (Keen, McCoy, & Powell, 2012: 135), and many storytellers have and still do use this principle. Fourthly, villains will rarely be given a backstory or exculpatory motives. The omission of any possible justification for their actions is tied to what psychologists call the Fundamental Attribution Error – a tendency to ascribe a stranger's behavior to their internal characteristics, rather than to the external circumstances they are in (Keen, McCoy, & Powell, 2012: 130). Connected to that is another tendency – to favor in-group members and mistrust out-group members. In the early days of human society, when smaller groups were fighting each other over land and resources, it was easy to ascribe the competing group's behavior to their inherent villainy. What was seen as heroic defending or conquering by one's own group was interpreted as evil sadism by the members of the other group.

1.2. The language of villains

1.2.1. What's in an accent?

The final, and for the purposes of this study, the most important of Kjeldgaard-Christiansen's predictions (2015: 10) is the tendency for villains to "display phenotypic markers that facilitate pseudospeciation", i.e. to be shown as clearly foreign and *Other*. This is most frequently done through language – more specifically, through a villain's accent, which is seen as one of the most salient indicators of group membership. In the early days of humanity, people were less likely to come into contact with those who differed greatly from them in terms of physical appearance, as it would have been necessary to traverse continents

in order to meet someone of a different race; rather, their differences were mainly a matter of language variation (Kinzler et al., 2009: 2). In fact, this preference for one's own language group seems to persist in contemporary humans, with research showing that children will prefer to befriend other children who have the same accent, but are of a different race, rather than those who are of the same race but speak in a different language variety (Kinzler et al., 2009: 7).

The idea that accent is a socially diagnostic marker of identity is central to the study of language attitudes and language stereotypes. Since the 1960s, starting with William Lambert's development of the matched guise technique, which allowed for the examination of latent stereotypes that might be attached to different language varieties, numerous studies have suggested a hierarchy of accents and dialects in terms of listeners' perceptions of their social prestige and attractiveness. Many of these studies have shown a general tendency for speakers of standard varieties to be rated higher on measures of social prestige such as education, intelligence, competence, success and status, and speakers of non-standard varieties to be rated higher on measures of social attractiveness like trustworthiness, kindness, honesty and humor (see, among others, Giles & Powesland, 1975; Luhman, 1990). This basic dichotomy is contextually bound, with some finding differences between American and British attitudes (Davis & Houck, 1992) and some finding standard speakers to be rated higher on social attractiveness and prestige alike (Davis & Houck, 1992; Coupland & Bishop, 2007).

What these studies all show, regardless of their specific findings, is that there are some language varieties which are considered prestigious, and some which are not. Prestigious varieties most often imply a standard language, which "at a given time and place, is generally *considered* correct: it is *held up* as *a model* of how one *ought* to speak, it is *encouraged in the classroom*, it is widely *regarded* as the most *desirable accent* for a person in a *high-status* profession to have" (Wells, 1982: 34, emphasis mine). The italicized words point to the fact

that this standard is imposed from above, thought to be superior not because of some inherent value, but rather because it is spoken and promoted by high-status speakers and institutions (Giles & Powesland, 1975: 10). This *standard language ideology* works through dominant bloc institutions which dutifully promote it: the educational system, corporate America, and the media through news and the entertainment industry (Lippi-Green, 1994: 166).

The final bloc is of particular interest in terms of the present study, with some researchers finding that non-standard accents are consistently stigmatized and shown in stereotypical ways on television and film, usually by way of associating them with foolish or villainous characters, while standard accents are upheld as the norm both by their frequent usage and alignment with heroic characters. A more comprehensive literature review of some such studies will be detailed in the following chapter.

1.2.2. A discourse of villainy

Accent is just one feature of someone's language, although perhaps the most salient one. The interest of this study, however, lies in villainous language as a whole, and whether there is a villainous discourse that can be defined and contrasted against other character discourses. Discourse is here understood in terms of what Gee (2001) calls "the big" D Discourse, as a way of enacting identity through language, using linguistic and non-linguistic elements (7) to create a recognizable cultural type which both originates from routine ways of enacting that same type and provides further impetus to keep (re)creating it in such a way (11).

That such a Discourse of villainy exists is shown by an implicit understanding most people have of what it means to be a villain. If someone was asked to act like a villain, in a charades game for example, they would immediately conjure a set of expectations of how to behave, how to move, which gestures to use, how to speak and in which words. School activities such as one described by Millard (2012) also confirm this. In a writing task, children

were asked to create their own stories featuring heroic and villainous characters, based on previous reading. In particular, they noted insults, commands, and rhetorical questions as main elements of villainous language (157), writing dialogue such as: "I'll show you my kingdom, scum, but be afraid, be very, very afraid". The willingness to use certain structures and words (such as imperatives and insults) but avoid others (such as compliments and signals of hesitation) show an implicit understanding of a set of conventions governing the language of particular characters.

Such conventions of a villainous discourse have not yet been systematized or written about in a comprehensive way. There are, however, other discourses which have been discussed by various linguists and which may aid in forming a preliminary notion of how villainous characters may structure their language. Providing the impetus for the story's action and presenting the final obstacle which the heroes need to conquer before the story may end, villains are necessary plot elements. Due to this narrative purpose, they are expected to be quite powerful – as truly threatening villains are imperative to make the heroes' successes feel earned and meaningful. Out of this follows a basic assumption that villainous language will be crafted so as to emphasize the power the villains have and the threat that they pose. On the other hand, the necessity of the villains ultimately being defeated, as well as their tendency to initially present themselves as lesser threats, suggests that their language might exhibit some conscious reduction of their level of power. Additionally, many theorists – especially those who have examined villainous portrayals in children's animation – found that villains are often shown as performing opposite-gender behavior. In other words, villainous men were shown as feminized, while villainous women were shown as masculinized (Li Vollmer & La Ponte, 2003; Towbin et al., 2004; Sharmin & Sattar, 2018).

With this interplay of authority and lack thereof, how power is linguistically treated within the development of a discourse of villainy is of particular interest. Erickson et al.

(1978) examined trial transcripts and distinguished between powerful and powerless speech styles based on the amount of contextual power certain speakers, such as judges, attorneys or defendants, had. Powerless speech style was shown to contain frequent hedges and hesitations (e.g. sort of, um), intensifiers (e.g. certainly, surely), and polite forms. Powerful speech style, on the other hand, exhibited such features far less frequently. It should be noted, however, that some researchers saw polite forms as quite powerful (Bradac & Mulac, 1984). Furthermore, some features of female speech, as first defined by Lakoff (1975), might also contribute to the creation of a discourse of villainy in male characters. In addition to the above mentioned features of powerless speech style, Lakoff also pointed out the use of specialized vocabulary, milder forms of expletives, empty adjectives (e.g. "divine", "cute"), more frequent tag questions, a wider range of pitch and intonation, and hypercorrect grammar, all of which were said to show a lack of authority.

1.3. The power of stories and Disney

To examine villainous discourse at large would go beyond the scope of this study, which represents merely a starting point of such research. Thus, it was decided to use a limited corpus of animated films, produced by one of the largest Hollywood studios. Aimed primarily at children, animated features are usually simple in nature, due to a need to provide clear cues easily understood by the widest and youngest audiences, and having to do so in a limited amount of screen time. This simplicity of form, however, does not imply simplicity of analysis.

The potential of modern media to heavily influence its consumers has long garnered critics' and academics' interest, especially in terms of affecting children, with some calling television a "surrogate parent" (Winn, 1977). It should be noted that with the expansion of technology in contemporary times and the availability of an almost immeasurable amount of

TV and film products through various streaming services, distinctions that were previously made between television and film are no longer of particular significance.

Much of the earliest research focused on violence, but has in the past few decades shifted onto examinations of representation and diversity (Murray, 1993). Stereotypes merit some discussion here. Rabinowitz and Mandler (1983) proposed the use of stereotypical patterns as an early organizer of children's knowledge, and many have emphasized the role of stereotypes as cognitive schemata necessary to organize the chaotic world around us (Kristiansen, 2001). Stereotypes are frequently used as quick and easy ways to build certain characters and immediately cue audiences into their motivations and personality. It follows that there are certain schemata used for the creation of villainous characters, especially in terms of their appearance and speech.

The problem arises from such schemes being consistently paired with stereotypical portrayals of marginalized social groups. With media allowing children to "catch glimpse of one another" (Palmer, Smith, & Strawser, 1993: 143), providing lessons both of one's own identity and culture and those of others, such portrayals may be internalized through repeated viewings. Many researchers have pointed out the "overwhelmingly European, male, and middle class" (Graves, 1993: 179) world as portrayed by media and the tendency to under- or mis-represent minorities such as various ethnic groups, sexual orientations, gender identities, women, and so on (Geiogaham & Pavel, 1993; Graves, 1993; Hamamoto, 1993; Signorielli, 1993; Subervi-Velez & Colsant, 1993). Promotion of such a worldview is likely to result in latent negative attitudes about other social groups, as well as, in some cases, of one's own.

1.3.1. Disney and the Disney Renaissance

As "perhaps the single most important strand in American children's film" (Booker, 2010: 86), Disney is especially interesting to critics and researchers. Today, the company is most known for two key franchises. The Disney Princesses are the cornerstone of the

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company, with films such as *Snow White* (1937) and *Cinderella* (1950) first establishing such characters as massive financial, critical and popular successes. On the opposite end of the spectrum are the Disney villains – the princesses' adversaries and, to many fans, the most interesting characters. Cashdan (1999) calls the witch the most compelling character of the fairy tale, the diva of the piece who must die because she "embodies the sinful parts of the self" (30). This principle may equally be applied to all the villains and villainesses in the Disney canon. The princess – villain dichotomy illustrates the traditional fairy tale narrative of the stories Disney chooses to tell, many of them being in fact adaptations of fairy tales, and often the only versions of such stories most people know (Zipes, 1995).

The format, with archetypal characters personifying a central conflict of good and evil, and imparting lessons of devotion, loyalty, patience, kindness and honesty, brought about Disney's initial and enduring success. In the early days of film, the medium was seen as inappropriate, especially for children (Booker, 2010: 3). Disney's alignment with the Hays Code, set in 1930 and stipulating that "no picture shall be produced that will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin" (Davis, 2013: 8-9) meant that its films eventually came to be seen as appropriate entertainment for the youngest audiences – a brand that Disney has carefully maintained ever since.

The company, established by brothers Walt and Roy Disney in 1923, came into prominence with their Mickey Mouse shorts, but truly became a cultural force with the release of *Snow White* in 1937 – the first animated feature, and arguably the first feature-length "children's film" ever made (Booker, 2010: 1). The film established certain conventions, such as the traditional fairy tale source and format, as well as the inclusion of musical numbers, animated animals, magic, slapstick violence, a love story and a happy ending – "the beginnings of what would come to be a well-developed discourse of Disney animated films"

(Booker, 2010: 5). These conventions were more or less followed by all subsequent features. *Snow White* ushered the company into its golden age of production, until the seventies and eighties, when, following the deaths of Walt in 1966 and Roy in 1971, the studio seemed to lose focus and the "magic" that first brought it success.

The tide changed with the appointment of Michael Eisner as the chairman and CEO in 1984. Eisner was brought on with the task of revitalizing the company – a task he completed with great success, ushering a decade of production that was rightfully dubbed the Disney Renaissance. Starting with *The Little Mermaid* (1989), the decade brought a string of films created with a clear goal of a re-birth, a new golden age. In fact, critics such as Booker have called the success of this period remarkable "not because it introduced new themes and techniques, but because it largely didn't, representing an attempt instead to reproduce the magic of the earlier classic Disney animated films" (37).

The Little Mermaid (1989) brought back the formula of "Disneyfied" fairy tales, and other films followed suit, proving to be great critical and commercial successes. *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) is to this day the first and only animated film to be nominated for a Best Picture Oscar, before the Academy established a separate category for animation. With *Aladdin* (1992), a clearly multicultural phase in production began, and greatly contributed to the trend of using established actors as the voices for its characters, starting with Robin Williams' Genie. *The Lion King* (1994) was the highest-grossing animated film at the time. It also pointed to a slight move away from the typical fairy tale sources, as it was based loosely on a Shakespearean tragedy. The films were still decidedly adaptations, though – *Pocahontas* (1995) was based on a historical account, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996) on a French novel, *Hercules* (1997) on a Greek myth, *Mulan* (1998) on a Chinese legend, and *Tarzan* (1999) again on a popular novel. Looking at the highest-grossing traditionally animated films,

all nine mentioned in this period are among the first 25, with *The Lion King* (1994) unchallenged in the first place (List of highest grossing animated films, *Wikipedia*).

Tarzan (1999) is largely considered the end of Disney Renaissance proper, with subsequent films failing to meet both commercial and critic expectations, and Disney did not really come back into the limelight of animated film production until the acquisition of Pixar in 2006. However, as the Disney Renaissance remains a phase well-known and beloved by fans across the world, and one that has produced some of the company's most iconic villains, these films were chosen as the corpus upon which this study aims to examine and analyze a discourse of villainy.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Critiques of Disney

Due to its cultural omnipresence, the Disney company has been a subject of many a critical inquiry, filling books with a variety of essays focusing on issues such as the representation of gender, race, and culture (Bell, Haas, & Sells, 1995; Cheu, 2013; Sandlin & Garlen, 2016).

Booker (2010) pointed out the fact that the true power of animated films such as those produced by Disney lies not in promoting specific attitudes, but rather in fostering a fundamental ideology and expectations about the world. He characterizes this ideology as one of "essential individualism". Individualism, he says, is seen by Disney as being who one truly is, which is an inherent quality one is born with. This idea, coupled with a celebration of the natural order of things, can have potentially problematic implications for anyone outside of the ideal representations of heroes and heroines. As Booker says: "The essentialist individualism of the classic Disney films, then, far from encouraging children to be all they can be in the pursuit of the American dream, threatens to marginalize disadvantaged children and lead them to conclude that, through their own personal shortcomings, they do not deserve to partake of that dream" (177), which may prove especially damaging with under- or mis-representation of different ethnic, socioeconomic or gender groups.

A particular point of interest is the last group, with many critics writing about the queer-coding of Disney villains. Sharmin and Sattar (2018) note that the heroic characters in Disney usually present rather stereotypical and exaggerated portrayals of gender – with the impossible curvatures of women's bodies and the sleek, muscled appearance of men's. Conversely, the images of villainous characters are entirely different, frequently exhibiting "deviant" gender behaviors (53). This is outright confirmed by some of the Disney animators

themselves, with Johnston and Thomas (1993) stating that most Disney villains are either women or feminized men, and their villainy is further illustrated through their old and unattractive appearance. Ursula from *The Little Mermaid* (1989), for example, is shown with masculinized features in sharp contrast to Ariel as an ultra-feminine princess: where Ariel is thin and slender, Ursula is fat, where Ariel's hair is long and lush, Ursula's is short and spiky, where Ariel has a beautiful singing voice, Ursula's is coarse and husky. Her heavy makeup and innuendos about body language as she moves in "sexualized shimmies" further point to drag queen performance upon which her character design and behavior was based on (54).

Li Vollmer and La Ponte (2003) also discuss the frequent portrayal of villains as gender-atypical and refer to this association of villainous characters with non-heteronormative behavior as "homonegativism", pointing out how it may contribute to creation and strengthening of negative attitudes towards non-heterosexual behavior amongst the viewing populace, and most dangerously children. Comparing the male protagonists with their villainous counterparts, the authors note that villains' faces are usually shown as long, narrow and with high cheekbones, in contrast to heroes' wide-set faces and broad jaws. Additionally, the villains' costumes tend to be "floor-length frocks", while the heroes' outfits are more muscle-revealing, adding to the expectations that the villains' physiques underneath such robes are "less than" acceptably masculine. Finally, nonverbal gestures are clearly coded as well, and the authors give the example of Scar (*The Lion King*, 1994), who frequently saunters, criss-crosses, preens and moves sleekly across the screen as opposed to Simba and Mufasa, who show no such gestures.

Another issue of representation frequently discussed by critics are the problematic portrayals of minority ethnic groups, such as African Americans (Lippi-Green 1997, Pandey 2001, Booker 2010). In this regard, ethnic and ethnicized villains are of particular importance as many point out a consistent portrayal of foreign villains in opposition to American heroes,

with language and accent, as well as design and appearance, being the most obvious tools of differentiation.

2.2. Accent and villains in film

Even though the language of villains has not been researched in great detail, many scholars have made brief observations on how villains tend to speak quite differently than heroes do, and how this difference is often presented in terms of accents, especially those that are tied to a lower socioeconomic class or a non-white ethnic group. Davis (2013: 25), for example, points out how "the lower East Side twang" was used to mark Lampwick as a negative character in *Pinocchio* (1940), while Booker (2010:58) mentions the "clearly ethnic slant" of villainous hyenas in *The Lion King* (1994).

The central study presented in this literature review is Lippi-Green's (1997, 2012) investigation into Disney and accent, part of her large-scale research presented in the book *English with an accent*. She starts by noting the long history of using language variation to "draw character quickly, building on established preconceived notions" (1997: 81), especially associating foreign accents with negative and villainous behavior. Animated film in particular, she states, shows this tendency, perhaps because of the need to provide easy entry points into plot and character to the youngest viewers. She illustrates this with an early example from *The Three Little Pigs* (1933) where the villainous wolf at one point dresses as a Jewish peddler. His appearance was, following criticism, changed in 1948, but the accent with clearly Yiddish features remained for much longer than that (1997: 79-80). In fact, Lippi-Green not only recognizes a link between villains and foreign portrayals but also suggests that animation is intrinsically tied to national fears throughout history, with Japanese and German villains during the Second World War, Russian spies in the fifties and the sixties, and Middle Eastern villains in a period of conflict with Iran and Iraq (1997: 85).

In her seminal study, she analyzed all the feature-length animated films produced by Disney available in 1997, coding characters for various language and characterization variables and focusing on accent in particular as a characterization tool, especially in terms of fostering stereotypes about non-American or regional American social groups. One of her findings was that 91 of 371 characters appear in settings where they would not logically speak English, but only 34 of them actually speak in foreign accents, with more foreign-accented characters appearing in US settings than abroad. This confirmed both the tendency to use foreign accents to signal "other" settings, but also to signal some character qualities. Examining the characters' motivations, she found that the "overall representation of persons with foreign accents is far more negative than that of speakers of US or British English": around 20% of US speakers were bad characters, while this percentage doubled (40%) for negatively coded non-native English speakers. Another important finding was the persistence of limiting, if not outright negative stereotypes, such as the consistent portrayal of French people as either "irascible" or "sensual rascals" (Lippi-Green, 1997: 100). In the 2012 edition, she also discusses a tendency to portray protagonists' sidekicks as "scrappy inner city tough guys with a heart of gold" (2012: 11), usually in animal or otherwise nonhuman form. She concludes the study by pointing to how such portrayals teach children to be "comfortable with *same* and to be wary about *other*" and thus promote both a national and a standard language ideology. Lippi-Green's work was used as a starting point for a number of young researchers looking into Disney and other animation studios and finding similar results – namely, that children's films are indeed likely to employ language stereotypes to portray various characters, including villains (Azad, 2009; Sønnesyn, 2011; Van Lierop, 2014).

Dobrow and Gidney (1998) conducted a similar analysis of linguistic patterns in animated characters on television. They coded characters from 76 children's programs for ethnic and gender identity, hero or villain status, physical appearance, personality traits and

linguistic markers. They found that people of color and women were underrepresented, that gender and ethnicity were marked by dialect stereotypes, and that villains were consistently shown with foreign or non-standard American accents. The majority of characters were noted as speaking in a way that used accent to illustrate some character quality. Villains were found to be overwhelmingly foreign – most often British, sometimes German or Slavic, and in some instances a mixture of many cultures impossible to pin down, in which "the fact that it was foreign seemed to be the point" (115). Furthermore, it was found that American villainous accents were all connected with low socioeconomic status, with a particular tendency towards Italian American and New York varieties. Foreign and non-standard accents were also frequently found among comic characters, though the authors note that British English was never used in this way. Finally, no villain exhibited the standard American accent, while only few heroic characters did, and usually in settings that were exclusively foreign or ethnic, where all characters spoke in non-standard or foreign accents.

Finally, Bleichenbacher (2012) dealt with the concept of *linguicism* (i.e. discrimination on the basis of language) in foreign films, finding a relationship between basic characterization of characters as positive or negative and the language(s) they used. Speakers of languages other than English tended to be shown as negative more often. Where two thirds of native speakers of English were shown as positive, the ratio was inverted for foreign characters, with two thirds of them being shown as negative. With the predominantly positive portrayals of native speakers, and the negative characters comprising the largest group among those who speak English in foreign accents, his study offered further evidence of negative stereotyping and marginalization of non-American accents in Hollywood movies.

2.3. A discourse of villainy

Most literature available on the topic of villains treats the issues of such characterization from a philosophical, sociological or psychological perspective. Alsford (2006), for example, relates the stories of heroes and villains to a persistent human need to create social templates of virtuous or abhorrent behavior, as does Klapp (1954; 2014) in examining a typological triad of heroes, villains, and fools as social types used to develop, codify and collectivize social norms, while Keen, McCoy and Powell (2012) examine the processes in viewer enjoyment or disavowal of such characters in popular media.

With a view of Discourse as a mixture of linguistic and non-linguistic elements used to enact a particular cultural model or identity, some interesting observations about the visual language of villainous portrayal may be mentioned here. As discussed above, villains tend to be designed in a way that codes them as queer or ethnic. Furthermore, the tradition of associating beauty and light colors with "the good guys" and ugliness and dark colors with "the bad guys" is a long-standing and even in contemporary media infrequently challenged one. In addition, an interesting observation is found in Ledoré (2012: 29) – of Disney villains tending to be portrayed through elements of demonic iconography and imagery. Such characters are often shown as making deals and asking others to sell their souls in order to gain a magical favor – such as Ursula in *The Little Mermaid* (1989) or Hades in *Hercules* (1997). Others are consistently associated with a red and black color scheme and snake-like motifs, like Jafar in *Aladdin* (1992).

Apart from the observations listed above – on the visual presentation of villainous characters, their likelihood of using foreign and non-standard accents, and a tendency to use structures and lexical items such as insults, commands, and rhetorical questions – there is no comprehensive literature on the language of villains. In a paper on Shakespeare's Iago and Richard III, Štolová (2011) based her analysis on the assumption that, in literature, language

reveals the characters' nature due to being a manifestation of their identity (22), and noted down some of the features the two examined villains seem to have in common. In particular, she observed that the villains showed an eloquence and mastery of language (28-29) that goes beyond that shown by other personages in the plays, with frequent use of various rhetorical devices, imaginative metaphors, and puns. Furthermore, they were seen as "usurping" the verbal space, taking control of the interactions and possessing a sort of "verbal dominance" irrespective of the conversational partner they are interacting with. Finally, she characterizes them as speaking with persuasion and "linguistic manipulation", both in terms of manipulating their own language to achieve the above outlined literary effects, and manipulating others with language to achieve plot-related, narrative goals.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Aim

The aim of this study is to investigate what constitutes the "linguistic anatomy of a villain". Departing from the assumption that language is a salient marker of identity, and can therefore be used in various media to build and develop characters in quick and efficient ways, the present study aims to define the characteristics of the language of villains, i.e. a presumed discourse of villainy. With this goal in mind, accent is first analyzed as the most identifiable feature of the speech of villainous and negatively coded characters, followed by a discourse analysis of other relevant linguistic and nonlinguistic details.

3.2. Research questions

The main research question is: What comprises the language of villains? Or, in other words: What kind of language is used to build villainous characters, especially in opposition to heroic characters, and in what way? In order to answer this, two main questions will be examined:

1. What kind of accent(s) do villains use, and (how) is this different from the accent(s) heroes use?

2. How are, and which, linguistic and non-linguistic elements used in creating the villains' identity, especially with regards to power?

3.3. Hypotheses

Several potential hypotheses may be outlined at this point. Firstly, language is used to characterize villainous characters and distinguish them from their heroic counterparts, which means that there will be distinct differences across the language use exhibited by both.

Secondly, there exists a definable Discourse of villainy, which differs from a Discourse of heroism in language.

Thirdly, villains are more likely to speak in foreign (non-American) and non-standard (regionally or socially marked) American accents. Conversely, heroes are more likely to speak in a standard American accent.

Fourthly, a Discourse of villainy is likely to combine elements of the powerful and powerless rhetorical styles to denote both a position of power and an ultimate loss of this power as per the narrative function of villainous characters.

3.4. Corpus

Nine films have been chosen for this analysis, all produced by the Disney company between 1989 and 1999, i.e. during a period known as the Disney Renaissance. The films are listed below:

1. *The Little Mermaid* (1989)
2. *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
3. *Aladdin* (1992)
4. *The Lion King* (1994)
5. *Pocahontas* (1995)
6. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996)
7. *Hercules* (1997)
8. *Mulan* (1998)
9. *Tarzan* (1999)

Belonging to the same period, these films exhibit some crucial similarities. Firstly, they all follow a standard plot formula, based on a traditional fairy-tale format with archetypal characters and a typical three-act structure. Secondly, they can all be said to belong to Disney's multicultural phase, portraying a variety of settings and cultures, and thus providing

a multitude of potential language varieties that might be used by the characters. Thirdly, this renaissance and multicultural decade in Disney production is one of the most critically and financially successful periods in the company's history. The popularity and wide reach of these films makes them especially interesting for a closer examination of their language use. This is particularly significant in terms of exploring how these films both reflect and affect real-world attitudes about particular social groups and language varieties they use by potentially associating them with villainous characters and behaviors. Finally, the relative simplicity of material that is aimed primarily (though not exclusively) at children, with clearly delineated plots and characters, provides a good entry point into the study of villainous discourse at large.

It should be noted that one other full-length animated feature was produced during this decade. *Rescuers Down Under* (1990) is a sequel to a 1977 film and as such does not quite fit into the idea of "reviving" the magic of Disney classics or exploring other cultures and settings, nor was it as financially and commercially successful as the rest of the corpus. For these reasons, it was decided that this film would be excluded from the analysis.

3.5. Materials and procedures

The DVDs of the nine films listed above were all collected and watched via a PC DVD player. Various tables, available in the Appendix, were used during and after the multiple viewings to note down and analyze particular linguistic and non-lingusistic information about the characters. These tables were used during the processes of character selection and auditory analysis. Finally, detailed transcripts of each film were made – a set with all characters' utterances, and a set with only the scenes in which the nine main villains appeared. These transcripts were used for the discourse analysis.

3.5.1. Selection and classification of characters

Each film was first watched in its entirety, so as to gain full understanding of each narrative context. During the first viewing, all the characters that appeared on screen were written down into a simple table designed to differentiate between positive, negative and neutral characters. This preliminary form can be found in the Appendix (Table 1). After each film, the list of characters in the form was checked against the full cast lists available during the credits, so as to make sure that every plot-relevant character was accounted for. Once all the lists were complete, the category *Other / Neutral* − meant for characters who exhibited no discernible motivation or were shown in peripheral roles with fewer than two lines of dialogue − was excluded. All the characters who exhibited no language, such as animal sidekicks, were also excluded.

Out of the two broad categories of positive and negative characters, subcategories were made to indicate the characters' narrative relevance. The main protagonists and antagonists were defined, as well as their potential love interests (exclusive to protagonists) and respective friends, family, and other supporters. The final categories are shown below, pointing to a hierarchy of narrative relevance, which is taken into account during the analysis.

NEGATIVELY CODED CHARACTERS		POSITIVELY CODED CHARACTERS	
A	primary antagonist	**P**	primary protagonist
A1	antagonists' primary helpers and friends	**P0**	secondary protagonist – love interest
A2	antagonists' secondary helpers and friends	**P1**	protagonists' primary helpers and friends
O (-)	minor negatively coded characters	**P2**	protagonists' secondary helpers and friends
		O (+)	minor positively coded characters

Figure 1. Character categorization

The final table listed 123 characters, who have more than two lines of spoken dialogue and are clearly motivated and coded. Certain characters were presented exclusively in groups, and a decision needed to be made regarding their inclusion. If such characters were given individual or collective names and were clearly positively or negatively coded, they were

included. It should be noted that the same principle of twolines applied here – several characters who exhibited no spoken dialogue were therefore excluded (e.g. two Muses in *Hercules*, 1997). If characters in groups were not given names individually or collectively, instead using basic denominations such as *townspeople* or *sailors*, and were not explicitly coded as positive or negative, they were excluded. The full table is shown in the Appendix (Table 2).

3.5.2. Coding for accent

The films were watched multiple times, with attention paid to the 123 characters selected for analysis. All of them were coded for accent via auditory analysis. It should be noted that there are some drawbacks to this method – most of all its subjectivity and potential for human error. However, this was mostly averted by using three broad categories, thus decreasing the likelihood of subjective or incorrect coding, as the distinctions between the three categories – standard American, non-standard American, and non-American – are much more apparent than the differences between particular dialects and accents.

Several points should be noted here. Firstly, accent is viewed as an ever-changing continuum rather than a fixed set of linguistic items that may be put into perfectly distinct categories. Secondly, due to the nature of these films – simple in form and produced largely by American casts and crews – many of the characters' accents may be described more as approximations than accurate and authentic renderings of specific language varieties. Thirdly, the interest of this study lies not in the specific accents used by villains, but rather in a broad existence of dichotomies such as "us" vs "them", "American" vs "non-American", "standard" vs "non-standard", and how this potentially plays into negative portrayals. Therefore, the characters were classified into one of three main categories: *Standard American English (SAE)*, *non-standard regionally or socially marked varieties of American English (NSAE)*, and

foreign-accented English (FE). This last category encompasses both native and non-native Englishes.

Still, even such a broad categorization leaves some outliers to be further accounted for. Some such cases are American actors who purposefully contrive foreign-sounding accents, but do so in inauthentic and inconsistent ways, leaving open the question of whether an accent should be classified as American (still sounding mostly so) or not (being a clear contrivance). One example is Gazeem, a minor character who appears at the beginning of *Aladdin* (1992) and exhibits mostly SAE features with some inconsistent foreign-sounding elements. This character was classified by Lippi-Green (1997, 2012) as SAE with the justification of one phonological feature not being enough to warrant another classification. However, a different approach is taken in this study: as the intention was clearly to make the character sound foreign, he is classified as such. In a way, the SAE—FE relation of the categorization presented here may be viewed as a spectrum, containing characters with distinctly SAE and those with distinctly foreign accents, as well as those in between who may be closer to one or the other end, and must be classified in terms of how foreign-sounding they appear in relation to others.

Based on the categorization outlined above, three tables were made taking into account the narrative relevance of the characters. Table 3.1. is concerned with the relationships between primary villains and heroes, as well as their love interests i.e. secondary protagonists, corresponding to categories A, P, and P0. Table 3.2. lists all the remaining negatively coded characters, corresponding to categories A1, A2, and O (-). Finally, Table 3.3. lists all the remaining positively coded characters, corresponding to categories P1, P2, and O (+). These may be found in the Appendix and were filled out during subsequent viewings of the films until each character was given a distinct SAE, NSAE or FE categorization.

3.5.3. Discourse analysis

The final step of the study was to conduct a critical discourse analysis of the villains' language. As mentioned, discourse is here treated in terms of what Gee (2001) calls "the big D" discourse, that is, a way of enacting identity through language. In other words, the discourse analysis undertaken here is concerned with how both linguistic and non-linguistic elements are used in the creation of villainous characters and their identities, both as individuals and as members of a particular social type.

Due to the limited scope of this thesis, only the main nine villains of the films (category A) were analyzed. As a point of reference, the language of primary and secondary protagonists – the heroes and their love interests – was also examined. Based on the limited literature on a potential discourse of villainy (Millard, 2012; Štolová, 2011), as well as assumptions on how other discourses such as powerful or female speech might be used to aid in its creation (Erickson et al., 1978; Lakoff, 1975), a number of isolated elements were found to be of interest:

Syntax: typical structures	Lexis: typical items	Auditory cues	Visual cues
Insults	Intensifiers	Hedges	Queer-coding
Commands	Specialized vocabulary	Hesitations	Ethnic-coding
Rhetorical questions	Milder expletives	Pitch and intonation	Dark color schemes
Polite forms	Empty adjectives	Usurping verbal space	Devil imagery
Tag questions	Metaphors and puns		
Hypercorrect grammar			

Figure 2. List of syntactic, lexical and non-linguistic features potentially connected to the discourse of villainy

The list presented above represents the point of departure for the discourse analysis, but should not be understood as the model or scheme by which the villains' language was analyzed. The table represents simply the summation of features that have previously been mentioned as (potentially) connected to a discourse of villainy. The analysis undertaken here is not merely a sum of all parts, but rather a selective contextualization of relevant data in

order to uncover a cultural model of villainy. Therefore, not all of the listed features will be discussed in detail.

The abovementioned transcripts were read multiple times, on their own and in combination with repeated film viewings, and comprehensive notes were taken throughout the process. The analysis began on a micro level, with a focus on the items listed above and their use amongst the nine characters, and then progressed to a contextualization of the overall findings on a macro level, examining how the language of villains was used to create a particular recognizable identity for such characters.

Finally, due to the limitations of the study, it would be impossible to present a thorough profile for each of the nine main villains, all of whom have unique identities and individual discourses. However, certain tendencies and similarities will be shown on illustrative examples. Three villains were chosen as representatives, each belonging to a different three-film phase within the decade. Ursula (*The Little Mermaid*, 1989) marks the very beginning of the Disney Renaissance, and is the only female villain in the corpus. Frollo (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 1996) belongs to a more serious stretch of films and is by many seen as the darkest Disney villain to date. Finally, Hades (*Hercules*, 1997) is at the helm of a more lighthearted phase in Disney production, and represents the first instance of a comic villain for the company.

4. RESULTS: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Accent

Nine characters are classified as primary antagonists. Five of them (55,55%) speak in a foreign accent – always the standard variety of British English. Regionally or socially marked varieties of American English are spoken by two characters (22,22%), while the remaining two use the standard American accent (SAE). On the other hand, all nine characters classified as primary protagonists speak in a standard American accent. With the inclusion of their respective love interests as secondary protagonists, the distribution shows only a slight change. A large percentage (94,44%) are still SAE-speaking; the only exception is Jane Porter (*Tarzan*, 1999) who speaks in a Standard British accent.

Accent	Primary antagonists		Primary protagonists		Protagonists and love interests	
SAE	2	22,22%	9	100%	17	94,44%
NSAE	2	22,22%	0	0%	0	0%
FE	5	55,55%	0	0%	1	5,56%

Figure 3. Distribution of accent among the primary antagonists and protagonists

The potential correlation of accent with positive or negative qualities, naturally, does not begin and end with the film's main characters. In order to create a comprehensive picture of accent usage amongst positively and negatively coded characters, it is necessary to look at the overall context – that is, to consider each of the 123 clearly coded characters listed in Table 2 (Appendix).

Of the 123 characters analyzed, 82 were classified as positively coded, and 41 as negatively coded. The bolded percentages in the last row of the table below were calculated on the basis of the total number of characters within each group of accent category.

	Protagonists and positively coded characters			Antagonists and negatively coded characters		
	SAE	NSAE	FE	SAE	NSAE	FE
TLM (1989)	7	2	2	2	1	1
BB (1991)	5	0	4	2	0	1
A (1992)	2	1	1	1	1	4
TLK (1994)	4	2	2	0	2	1
P (1995)	5	0	5	0	0	1
HND (1996)	4	2	2	2	0	1
H (1997)	6	4	1	8	1	3
M (1998)	7	3	2	7	0	1
T (1999)	5	2	2	0	0	1
N(characters)	= 45	= 16	= 21	= 22	= 5	= 14
%(total)	36,59%	13,01%	17,07%	17,89%	4,06%	11,38%
%(group)	**54,88%**	**19,51%**	**25,61%**	**53,65%**	**12,20%**	**34,15%**

Figure 4. Distribution of accent among all the positively and negatively coded characters

The distribution of accents between the two main categories of characters (positively and negatively coded) shows that around half of the characters in each group speak in a Standard American English accent, proving it to be the most common accent across all characters, regardless of motivation. Of positively coded characters, 19,51% speak in regionally or socially marked American varieties, while only 12,20% of the negatively coded characters do so. This would seem to contradict the expectation that negative characters will show a greater tendency to use non-standard accents. Finally, 25% of positively coded characters speak in various non-American accents, while this number rises to 34,15% amongst negatively coded characters. This would seem to provide support for the hypothesis that foreign accents are more likely to be used by villainous and negative characters.

As was stated in the previous chapter, a decision was made not to exclude all group-bound characters as they also represent an important aspect in the overall linguistic picture of villains and heroes. To ensure the validity of results detailed above, it should be checked if there are any relevant changes if all the group members are reduced to just one representative for each language variety (e.g. where all characters speak in the same accent, one

representative remains; where there are multiple varieties present in one group, each variety is given one representative).

	Protagonists and positively coded characters			Antagonists and negatively coded characters		
	SAE	NSAE	FE	SAE	NSAE	FE
TLM (1989)	5 (-1)	2	2	1 (-1)	1	1
BB (1991)	5	0	4	2	0	1
A (1992)	2	1	1	1	1	4
TLK (1994)	4	2	2	0	2	1
P (1995)	5	0	5	0	0	1
HND (1996)	4	2	2	2	0	1
H (1997)	5 (-1)	4	1	5 (-3)	1	1 (-2)
M (1998)	7	3	2	3 (-4)	0	1
T (1999)	4 (-1)	2	2	0	0	1
N(characters)	= 42	= 16	= 21	= 14	= 5	= 12
%(group)	**53,17% ▼**	**20,26% ▲**	**26,57% ▲**	**45,16% ▼**	**16,13% ▲**	**38,71% ▲**
%(previously)	*54,88%*	*19,51%*	*25,61%*	*53,65%*	*12,20%*	*34,15%*

Figure 5. Distribution of accent among the positively and negatively coded characters, with the exclusion of some characters presented within linguistically homogenous groups

Three characters were excluded from the positively coded category (one of Ariel's sisters, one Muse, and Mungo), leaving 79 characters. Ten characters were excluded from the negatively coded group (Flotsam, three Titans, four Elite Huns, two Fates), leaving 31 characters. In this way, any potential effect of data being skewed by overrepresenting certain varieties is averted. The changes made by such a subtraction are small, but not entirely irrelevant. Around half of the characters in each group still speak in a SAE accent – however, while both groups show a reduced percentage due to losing characters, the heroes are only down by 1,71% while the number of SAE-speaking villains decreased by 8,49%. This might suggest a stronger connection of SAE with positively than with negatively coded characters. The other variables increase slightly, with some difference in percentages based on positive or negative coding: around 4% increases in categories of non-standard and foreign accents for villains, and around 1% increases in the same categories for positive characters. Though small, these changes show a rising trend among villains towards foreign accents (a 12,14%

difference), while the non-standard varieties are still mostly spoken by positive characters, though by a significantly smaller margin (a 4,13% difference).

The distribution of accents amongst the main narrative roles seems to suggest that Disney's heroes are almost always expected to speak in a standard American accent, while the villains are more linguistically diverse, showing a greater tendency towards foreign (though always British English) and regionally or socially marked American varieties. Since such a tendency does not exist amongst the protagonists, it would be safe to assume that there is, indeed, a link between villainy and foreign and non-standard American accents. In fact, when all clearly motivated characters are accounted for, it is seen that non-American accents are spoken more by negative (34,15%) than positively coded (25%) characters, which further supports the expectation the language of villains will function to characterize them as foreign.

However, a different trend is suggested by the distribution of non-standard American varieties across all clearly coded characters; 19,51% of positive characters speak in non-standard American varieties, while only 12,20% of the negative characters do the same. This particular finding seems to contradict the hypothesis that villainous characters will tend more towards non-standard varieties, while positive ones will be more likely to use SAE. However, upon examination of the types of characters found speaking NSAE varieties, a different tendency becomes obvious, one that has been already noted by Lippi-Green (2012) – the usage of regional and social American dialects to portray comic sidekicks presented as the heroes' best friends. Indeed, of the fifteen characters that may be classified into such a type, eleven speak in regionally or socially marked US accents, and most of them a New York variety.

4.1.1. Characters and setting

In order to assess the link between language and characterization, it is necessary to first define the strength of correlation between accents and settings (Lippi-Green, 1997; Azad, 2009). In other words, an analysis of the appropriateness of various language varieties in various language settings should reveal whether language is used more to develop setting or character.

All but one of the nine films have a clearly specified setting. These settings are diverse and in line with the multicultural affinities of the Disney Renaissance – there are only two settings where there would be an expectation of characters speaking in English, and both of the films in question (*Pocahontas* and *Tarzan*) have a "dual" setting: the story takes place in a non-English speaking setting, but some of the characters are explicitly stated to originate from Great Britain. The only film that does not have a defined setting is *The Little Mermaid*, and its 15 characters are therefore excluded from this segment, leaving a total of 108 characters.

Film	Setting / origin	Total number of characters	N (setting appropriate)	N (not setting appropriate)	N (SAE-speaking)	N (not SAE-speaking)
The Little Mermaid	undetermined (mythical)	15	/	/	9	6
Beauty and the Beast	France	12	2	10	3	7
Aladdin	Middle Eastern	10	4 *	6	3	7
The Lion King	Africa	11	1	10	4	7
Pocahontas	NA Virginia / England	11	6	5	5	6
The Hunchback of Notre Dame	France	11	1 *	10	6	5
Hercules	Ancient Greece	23	/	23	14	9
Mulan	China	20	3	17	14	6
Tarzan	Africa / England	10	3	7	5	5
N = 108			20 (**18,52%**)	88 (**81,48%**)		

Figure 6. The appropriateness of characters' accents with regard to the setting

A standard American variety seems to be the baseline, with more than 50% of the characters using it. This is, of course, not an entirely unexpected finding given the provenance of the films. Still, such a situation creates interesting implications. *The Little Mermaid*, the only film shown in an undefined setting, may perhaps be the best example – when no language is logically expected, SAE seems to be the immediate choice. However, this trend is even more revealing in settings where there is an expectation of a different language, with most of the portrayed Native Americans, Ancient Greeks, the French, the Chinese, and even African lions and apes, speaking in a standard American accent. Moreover, only 20 characters (18,52%) may be said to speak in setting-appropriate ways. This would point to the characters' language not being beholden to the setting, which would in turn imply that language is used moreso as a tool of characterization. Additionally, of the 20 characters speaking in appropriate accents, most of them may be said to adhere to certain (stereo)types, which will be discussed shortly. In fact, this is true for many non-SAE speaking characters, regardless of the relative appropriateness of their accents.

These data suggest two things – firstly, that SAE is used as a neutral "non-accent" is confirmed by more than half the characters speaking it, regardless of the setting and individual origin. Secondly, the relatively small number of characters speaking in setting-appropriate ways affirms that language is used as a characterization tool, as previous research has suggested.

4.1.2. Aristocracy and the help

Characters who belong to an aristocracy of their world – including mermaids, lion kings, and gods – are most often shown speaking a standard accent, with SAE still being the most common one. Interestingly, RP is usually used for those characters who are more negatively presented – for example, the naive and inefficient Sultan (*Aladdin*), the pompous and arrogant prince Achmed (*Aladdin*), and the greedy, social-climbing Governor Ratcliffe

(*Pocahontas*). Conversely, no SAE-speaking aristocrat is shown negatively, apart from some xenophobic tendencies displayed by King Triton and Kerchak in the first halves of their respective films (*The Little Mermaid* and *Tarzan*) – even then, they progress beyond such views by the end of their stories. The two aristocrats with foreign accents belong to non-American cultures (Native American and Chinese) and are shown as the highest-esteemed members of their societies, embodying the positive connotations associated with them (such as wisdom, honor, and mental strength).

On the other hand, the aristocracy's "help" may be easily classified into two categories according to accent use. RP is spoken by pompous, uptight and overly proper characters, even though they are otherwise shown as positive (e.g. Grimsby, Cogsworth, Zazu). The only exception to this type is Jafar, but the image of a power-hungry royal vizier is a type in its own right. The characters from the second category speak in foreign or regional accents, and this downgrade in "linguistic prestige" is mirrored in them occupying less prestigious job positions: maids and housekeepers (Carlotta, Mrs Potts, Featherduster) or chefs and waiters (Louis, Lumiere).

4.1.3. Foreigners

In line with previous research (Lippi-Green, 1997; Dobrow & Gidney, 1998), it is clear that many characters are given foreign accents consciously and with the purpose of portraying their country's stereotypes. This is most obvious with characters whose native languages are not any variety of English. The three French characters, for example, are a hot-blooded chef, "an amorous butler" (Lippi-Green, 2012: 8) and a literal French maid. The two oldest Native American characters in *Pocahontas* are the honorable chief and the wise shaman, and they speak in strong Native American accents, even though the rest of their people are all SAE-speaking. Similarly, the type of the wise shaman is the only character speaking in a Swahili accent in *The Lion King*. The two oldest characters in *Mulan* are calm,

collected, honorable and capable of reciting poignant aphorisms whenever the need occurs – and they both speak with strong Chinese L1 patterns.

Such (stereo)types as mentioned above are not negative, though Lippi-Green would argue that they are certainly limiting and therefore problematic (1997: 99). The issue is further complicated, however, when foreign accents are used to portray explicitly negative stereotypes about non-American people. Chi Fu, the third character in *Mulan* with more distinctive Chinese L1 patterns, is shown as sly, misogynistic and very feminized – ticking the proverbial boxes of stereotypically portraying Asian men as cunning, traditional and non-sexual or sexually unappealing (Mok, 1998). Nearly everyone in *Aladdin* who is not part of the main cast is shown in an overtly negative way – with Gazeem being a greedy thief, the guards taking delight in the idea of murdering Aladdin, and a market vendor ready to cut off Jasmine's hand for taking one apple. The opening song of the film, sung in a contrived Middle Eastern accent by Robin Williams, illustrates the problem fairly well, with lyrics describing Agrabah as a land "where they cut off your ear if they don't like your face", before the backlash forced Disney to change the two offending lines (the next line "it's barbaric, but hey, it's home" wasn't changed until the live action remake released this year).

The British accent(s) – the most common variety of non-American English by far – is treated in a dual way. Positive British-speaking characters are usually portrayed as polite and proper, as well as somewhat pompous and pretentious. Alternatively, Mrs Potts is literally a teapot. The characters not portrayed in these stereotypical ways usually fit into one of the categories mentioned above, e.g. Jane (*Tarzan*) is a secondary protagonist, while Hera and Sultan (*Hercules* and *Aladdin* respectively) are aristocrats; or, they are keeping with the setting and narrative, like Professor Porter and Clayton (*Tarzan*) or Thomas, Ben and Lon (*Pocahontas*) – all characters who are clearly stated to come from Great Britain.

FILM	SBE				Other BrE
The Little Mermaid	Grimsby ■				
Beauty and the Beast	Cogsworth ■	Monsieur d'Arque ■			Mrs Potts ■
Aladdin	Jafar ■	Sultan ■			
The Lion King	Scar ■	Zazu ■			
Pocahontas	Ratcliffe ■	Thomas ■	Ben ■	Lon ■	
The Huncback of Notre Dame	Frollo ■	Victor ■			
Hercules	Hera ■				The Fates ■
Mulan					
Tarzan	Clayton ■	Jane ■	Prof. Porter ■		

Figure 7 – List of characters speaking in varieties of British English. Green, red, blue, and black colors are used for characters who may be said to fulfill a certain (stereo)type. Purple colors are used for characters who speak in setting-appropriate ways.

The rest of the characters speaking in British accent(s) – Monsieur d'Arque, Jafar, Scar, Ratcliffe, Frollo, Clayton, and the three Fates – all have one thing in common: they are presented as evil, corrupt, power hungry, cunning, menacing, or all of those things. None of them, apart from Ratcliffe and Clayton, actually *are* from England: Monsieur d'Arque and Frollo are French (and, interestingly, voiced by the same actor), Jafar is Middle Eastern, Scar is an African lion, and the Fates are creatures from Greek mythology.

It would appear, then, that characters with British accents, apart from those few who are clearly stated to actually originate from Britain, are most often shown as either aristocratic, proper and high-brow elitists, or as evil.

4.1.4. Villains

Looking at the distribution of villains amongst the three main categories of accent, it seems that they are about equally as likely to speak in a Standard American accent as they are to speak in a foreign accent, especially once all the characters presented in linguistically quite homogenous groups or pairs are reduced down to one representative (unit). However, such an equal distribution is only true when looking at the overall picture of negatively coded

characters. If only the main villains are examined, most are found to speak in a foreign accent, and a smaller amount in SAE and non-standard American varieties.

	A	A1	A2	O -
SAE	Gaston	*Flotsam and Jetsam* (2)	Guard 1	Nessus
	Shan Yu	Lefou	Brutish Guard	Matchmaker
		Pain	Oafish Guard	
		Panic	*The Titans* (4)	
		The Elite Huns (5)	Cyclops	
NSAE	Ursula	Iago		
	Hades	Shenzi		
		Banzai		
FE	Jafar		Monsieur d'Arque	Louis
	Scar		Gazeem	Prince Achmed
	Ratcliffe		Guard 2	Chi Fu
	Frollo		*The Fates* (3)	
	Clayton			

Figure 8 – Distribution of accent amongst negatively coded characters

The foreign accent used by the primary antagonists is always a Standard British one or an approximation of it. Of the five characters with this accent, only two (Ratcliffe and Clayton) are actually from Great Britain. Of the four American-sounding characters, two speak in non-standard varieties, meant to give the characters a particular "flavor". Ursula speaks in a non-rhotic way that evokes Old Hollywood stars, which was appropriated by some camp performers, including Divine, the real-life drag queen Ursula's design and demeanor were based on (Sharmin & Sattar, 2018: 54). Hades, on the other hand, speaks in a manner of a salesman: fast-paced, distinctly non-standard and with some Yiddish lexical items. These two characters show that even when villains are American, they are often carefully put into categories that differentiate them from the typical American heroes; drag queens and pushy salesmen are far from the ideal of the mainstream American dream.

There are two main villains who speak in a SAE accent. For Shan Yu (*Mulan*), this may be a case of political correctness and conscious avoidance of making the villain sound overtly Asian in an all-Asian cast film. Alternatively, it might be a way of differentiating the

Huns from the Chinese, who exhibit various levels of Chinese L1 features in their speech, some consistently (like the Emperor, Chi Fu and Fa Zhou) and some quite infrequently and less distinctly, which gained them a SAE classification (like Ling, Chien Po, and Fa Li). Conversely, none of the Hun characters exhibit any such non-American features, consistent or not. Gaston (*Beauty and the Beast*) is seen by many as a deconstruction of the typical American hero (Davis, 2013: 235) – young, handsome, with a booming American voice, but an embodiment of toxic masculinity and fear of the other. In a film that deals with the juxtapositions of inner and outer beauty, it makes sense that the main opposition to Beast, a character-thesis on the importance of what is *inside*, is Gaston, a character-thesis on the deceptiveness of physical attractiveness. In such a dichotomy, less interest is placed on differentiating the characters linguistically, at least in terms of their accents.

An examination into the villains' main friends and supporters (A1) reveals that they never have a foreign accent – they are always American, with 10 characters (4 units) speaking SAE accents, and 3 non-standard American varieties. The SAE-speaking characters are usually clearly differentiated by other means: Flotsam and Jetsam have digitally altered voices to make them sound more menacing, Lefou, Pain, and Panic sport typical "dumb cartoon" (Lippi-Green 1997: 80) voices, and the Elite Huns speak in curt, short, to-the-point sentences.

The NSAE characters may all fit the bill of the comic relief sidekick to an extent, further corroborated by the fact that they are all voiced by famous American comedians (Gilbert Gottfried, Whoopi Goldberg, Martin Cheech). They do not really represent the type of the street-smart, heart-of-gold best friend – of necessity, by being in opposition to the protagonists – but still show an interesting trend of associating non-standard varieties with comic characters. No other negatively coded characters speak in NSAE varieties.

The villains' secondary friends and supporters (A2), therefore, exhibit only SAE and FE varieties. When foreign, they are either English, like the RP Monsieur d'Arque or the

regionally British Fates, or vaguely Middle Eastern (Gazeem and Guard 2 from *Aladdin*), falling into the categories already described above: evil Brits and problematically racialized foreigners. When they are SAE-speaking, there are again efforts to differentiate them in other ways: Oafish Guard (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*) as well as Cyclops (*Hercules*) have "dumb cartoon" voices, The Titans and Cyclops (*Hercules*) have very limited syntax, and the Guard (*Aladdin*) is characterized by a deep, husky voice. This same voice is used for Nessus, a member of the final category of negatively coded characters (O -). The other SAE-speaking character from this category, the Matchmaker from *Mulan*, shows a rather coarse, deep voice as well. Finally, the three foreign characters may all be seen as stereotypical representations to a certain degree: Louis is a French chef, Prince Achmed a pompous royal, and Chi Fu a misogynistic, nonsexual Asian man.

To sum up, it seems that the main villains of the Disney Renaissance indeed show a tendency to use foreign accents, and always a British one. This Evil Brit persona seems to be the archetypal villain of the nineties, and it would be interesting to see how this conception might have changed in recent times – with some researchers pointing out that it seems to have been abandoned in favor of greater political correctness and a trend of either humanizing villains or making them completely non-individual and representative of some abstract "evil" such as capitalism or racism. (Azad, 2009; Sønnesyn, 2011).

On the other hand, only two of the main villains and three of their supporters speak in non-standard American varieties, disproving the initial hypothesis that villainous characters will show more of a tendency towards regionally or socially marked dialects. This is offset by a large number of positive characters using non-standard American varieties – most of them belonging to a type of the comic sidekick that has been described above. This might explain why the NSAE characters are largely positive – once this particular stereotype has been enforced, Disney might have felt it would be unnatural to use the same language for

characters with nefarious motivations. Another reason is also the fact that protagonists' sidekicks are very rarely presented as unintelligent, apart from maybe Scuttle (*The Little Mermaid*) and Pumbaa (*The Lion King)* who make up for their lack of intellectual ability with other things, such as empathy and emotional intelligence. On the other hand, many of the villainous supporters are indeed presented as unintelligent or unreasonable, as it seems that the constrictions of family-friendly animated films stipulate the villainous side to be shown as clearly in the wrong, which might translate into unintelligence (why would anyone follow a villain if they *were* intelligent?) or inherent meanness.

4.2. A discourse of villainy

4.2.1. The Other and the devil

As has been shown, the linguistic baseline in these films seems to be a standard American accent, making non-American accents the most apparent way in which villains are linguistically characterized and denoted as *Other*. This is especially true for the primary villains of the films, with five of them speaking in a foreign accent. Of the remaining four villains, two speak in non-standard American varieties, and there are several linguistic elements further characterizing them as *Other*. At one point, Ursula emphasizes the pronunciation of the tag question "innit", typically used in British dialects, while Hades makes frequent use of Yiddish vocabulary items, such as "schlemiel", "bozo", and "yutz". It should be noted that, apart from the examples above, such elements are not particularly frequent, and are even more likely to be said by a different type of character altogether: the comic sidekick, presumably precisely because of the tendency for this type to speak in NSAE varieties, which is then further emphasized by the use of specific dialectal items.

Non-linguistic cues play a greater role in Othering villains. They are visually presented as departing from the norm in some way – if the norm is taken to be young, White,

heterosexual, and compliant with Western beauty standards, which is the case for all the heroes and their love interests. One such departure is the character's ethnicity. In a film set in the Middle East, Jafar is drawn with the most obvious racial features: a darker complexion, prominent dark under eyes, and a large hooked nose. Shan Yu and his army are presented as darker and physically larger than the Chinese characters. Furthermore, even when the villains are not explicitly ethnic, some such features persist in their visual design. Ratcliffe, Frollo, and Clayton all have similar large hooked noses, while Ursula, Scar, and Hades are shown with distinctly darker complexions than the rest of their mythical or animal peers: Ursula is purple-skinned while all the mermaids are White, Scar is the only black-maned lion and his fur is several shades darker than that of the other lions, and Hades' muted blue-gray skin is in sharp contrast with the bright, vivid complexions of the Olympians.

Another departure is the characters' size. Ursula and Ratcliffe are both shown as overweight, with prominent double chins and comically large bodies in comparison to the protagonists. Gaston, Shan Yu, and Clayton may be seen as less negative examples of this tendency, with their caricatured physique being a consequence of overblown muscles rather than body fat – still, the intention is clearly to show them as different (and bigger) than the heroes. On the other end of the spectrum is the exaggerated thinness of characters like Jafar, Scar, and Frollo. With some critics pointing to such physiques as queer-coding (Li Vollmer & La Ponte, 2003), these features may be interpreted as an additional layer of Othering.

A final note on the villains' visual design concerns associations with devil iconography (Ledoré, 2012). A clearly Christian perspective seems to underlie Disney films, with villains often shown as devil-like figures in opposition to more saintly heroes. A good example is Hades, the Greek god of the Underworld. Bearing no negative connotations in the original mythology, nor any particular relation to the myth of Hercules, Disney adapted him to a more Christian scenario – as is the case with gods of the dead in many works of

contemporary pop culture. Par for the course, he is shown in the darkness of the underworld (hell), away from Olympus (heaven), eventually inciting a rebellion against Zeus (the Father God figure) and plotting to take his throne. His attire and flaming hair associates him with darkness and fire. However, the most suggestive, if initially less obvious, way of casting him as a devil-like character is through his language. "You like making deals," Hercules states in the final act of the film, and Hades is indeed shown as having made many throughout the film. Interestingly, the language he uses to persuade others into entering a deal with him is reminiscent more of a persistent salesman than a truly terrifying demonic force – a tendency which will be discussed below – however, the association is clear.

1. Hades: You **sold your soul to me** to save your boyfriend's life.

2. Hades: Which is exactly why I got a feelin' you're gonna leap at **my new offer**. **You give me** the key to bringing down wonder breath **and I give you** the thing that you crave most in the entire Cosmos: your freedom.

3. Hades: Here's the **trade-off**. **You give up** your strength for about 24 hours, okay? Say, the next 24 hours, **and Meg here is free** as a bird and safe from harm. We dance, we kiss, we schmooze, we carry on, we go home happy. Whaddya say?

         (…)

         Going once. Going twice –

4. Hades: Okay, okay, okay. You get her out **– she goes, you stay**.

4.2.2. Benevolent and benign

While such religious connotations paint these characters as clearly villainous figures, they often use language to present themselves in entirely different ways. An examination into how the villains refer to themselves, and thus frame their personas within the narrative, reveals a dual nature. On the one hand, they tend to present themselves as benevolent and friendly, sympathetic to the heroes' problems and capable of helping them. This benevolence will often be paired with a sense of victimhood, making them appear less threatening. On the other hand, they are shown as authoritative personalities, and while they may frame

themselves as positive presences in the heroes' lives, their language reveals an obvious power imbalance.

Frollo is an especially illustrative example. In his first appearance he shows himself to be a cruel and bigoted man, relentlessly pursuing "gypsies" and eventually causing the death of one – Quasimodo's mother. When Frollo inspects the wrapped bundle he thought to be "stolen goods", he finds a baby. Proclaiming it to be a demon due to its physical deformities, he plans on drowning the child in the nearby well. Confronted by the archdeacon, Frollo eventually agrees to care for the child, but only on the condition that he remains isolated from society, and because he saw a certain usefulness in it.

Frollo:	*Just so he's kept locked away where no one else can see*. The bell tower, perhaps. And who knows – our Lord works in mysterious ways. *Even this foul creature may yet prove one day to be / of use to me*.

The first scene he shares with Quasimodo shows the narrative Frollo has been carefully crafting over the years, casting himself in the role of Quasimodo's adoptive father, teacher, and protector – but also his superior in every way. Once the two sit for lunch, Frollo suggests that they review the alphabet, which shows him to be in charge of Quasimodo's education. This education is centered wholly on religion, but in a very negative way. All of the religious terms Quasimodo names in this brief exchange are connected with sinfulness – "abomination", "blasphemy", "contrition", "damnation", "eternal damnation". When he slips up and names "festival" as the word starting with the letter F, Frollo spits out his drink in shock and launches into a lengthy lesson on the wickedness and cruelty of the world. The ensuing exchange illustrates the kind of role Frollo wishes to have in Quasimodo's life.

Quasimodo:	I didn't mean to upset you, <u>master</u>.
Frollo:	Quasimodo, can't you understand? When your **heartless mother abandoned you** as a child, anyone else would have drowned you. And this is **my thanks** for **taking you in and raising you as my son**?

Quasimodo:	I'm sorry, <u>sir</u>.
Frollo:	Oh, my **dear** Quasimodo, you don't know what it's like out there. I do… I do…
	*The world is cruel / The world is wicked / It's **I alone whom you can trust** in this whole city / I am **your only friend** / **I who keep you, teach you, feed you, dress you** / I who look upon you without fear / How can **I protect** you, boy / Unless you always stay in here / Away in here?*
	Remember what I've **taught you**, Quasimodo.

Frollo creates a narrative wherein he was the first person to save Quasimodo after his "heartless mother" abandoned him. He refers to him with affection, and insists that he is the only person Quasimodo can trust – his only friend, his teacher, his helper and protector. However, the fact that he demands gratitude for this, as well as Quasimodo addressing him as "master" and "sir" tells the audience enough about how truly affectionate this relationship is.

The key to successfully (if only partially or temporarily) presenting themselves as amenable to the protagonists is to appear generally non-threatening. Frollo may be the least successful in this, as even though his outward behavior might not be construed as particularly menacing, it is clear that Quasimodo is afraid of him. Even so, he has Quasimodo's obedience and an illusion of an affectionate relationship that goes unchallenged until much later in the film.

Hades is perhaps the most obvious example of presenting a non-threatening persona. Everything about his language is carefully crafted so as to appear affable, from the way he frames himself within the narrative, to the way he addresses other characters. Therein lies his main method of persuasion, as well as his audience appeal – he is the comic villain, arguably the first of his kind for Disney. His appearances throughout the film are peppered with jokes and puns about the setting, his vocation, and other characters, making him appear much less ominous than one might expect of a god of the dead who is plotting to wake ancient evil Titans and lead a cosmic uprising.

1.Hades:	Y'know, I haven't been this choked up since I got a hunk of moussaka caught in my throat! Huh! So is this an audience or a mosaic? Hey, how ya doin'? Lookin' good – nice dress.
2. Hades:	Baboom. Name is Hades, Lord of the Dead. Hi. How ya doin'?
3. Hades:	It's a small underworld after all, huh?

A villainous type such as Frollo speaks very deliberately and slowly, pausing for effect frequently. His grammar is correct at all times and he makes frequent use of imperatives and threats. His menacing nature derives partly out of this formal, constrained use of language. Hades belongs to a different type altogether. He speaks in a very informal way, contracting many of his words ("gotta", "whaddya", "doin'", etc). The less serious, comedic style of speaking lends itself to a less serious, comedic personality. Interestingly, he does not outright lie at any time – unlike Frollo who speaks of Quasimodo's heartless mother and his selfless care for him. Hades refers to himself as "Lord of the Dead" and fully lays out his evil plans several times throughout the film. However, he makes such statements in a characteristically fast-talking and humorous way, making for a much less ominous effect. Additionally, he uses the language of business and sports to talk about his potentially world-altering schemes, making them appear more as company projects or football games.

1. Hades:	So, is this kid gonna mess up **my hostile takeover** big, or what?
2. Hades:	My favorite part of the **game**: sudden death.
3. Hades:	See, I've got a **major deal in the works. A real estate venture**, if you will.
4. Hades:	So much for the **preliminaries**, and now on to the **main event**!

Finally, another way to appear non-threatening is for villains to frame themselves as victims, unjustly wronged in some way – usually in terms of the amount of power they have or wish they had. For example, Ursula believes she was unjustly banished by King Triton, Gaston is upset by Belle's rejection of his marriage proposal, Scar thinks he was robbed off

his right to the throne when his nephew was born, and Hades resents Zeus for relegating him to the underworld.

1. Ursula: And now, look at me. **Wasted away to practically nothing**. **Banished and exiled and practically starving** while he and his flimsy fish-folk celebrate.

2. Ga.ston: **Dismissed**. **Rejected**. **Publicly humiliated**. Why, it's more than I can bear.

3. Scar: **Life's not fair**, is it? You see, I… well, **I shall never be King**.

4. Hades: "Hey, love to, babe, but **unlike you gods lounging about up here, I regrettably have a full-time gig** that you, by the way, **so charitably bestowed on me**, Zeus."

All of the above examples show a layer of irony – Ursula speaks of her starvation while gesturing to her overweight body, Gaston resents Belle's public humiliation of him even though his proposal attempt may be seen as humiliating for her, Scar laments the unfairness of life while getting ready to kill and eat a mouse, and Hades imbues his response to Zeus with biting cynicism. This irony shows the characters' bitterness which ultimately spurs them to take action, causing the major conflicts in their respective stories. Ursula's plan to get revenge on King Triton is to use Ariel to trick him into giving up his crown. Gaston hatches a plot to force Belle into marrying him. When she rejects him again, he leads the whole town into the culminating battle at the Beast's castle. Scar plans on murdering Mufasa and Simba to gain the throne for himself. Hades schemes to "rearrange the Cosmos" and dethrone Zeus. All these plans center around the desire for some sort of power, either social or political. Indeed, power is the key concept in villainous characterization, and comprises the second aspect of such characters' duality.

4.2.3. Power and authority

Throughout the films, the villains show a certain level of authority and power over other characters, whether covertly or overtly – even when they are presenting themselves as benevolent and benign, their language use betrays unmistakable authority over others. One

way in which this is demonstrated is through what Štolová (2011: 30) calls the usurpation of verbal space. In the scenes they share together, villains will most often take up most of the interactional and visual space.

The first encounter between Ursula and Ariel illustrates this imbalance of power well. At no point is Ariel in control of the action – she is led onto scene by Flotsam and Jetsam, Ursula's two helpers, working under her command. She briefly stops when passing what Ursula calls her "little garden" – a euphemistic name for what is essentially shown as hell, with wormlike creatures Ursula has previously made deals with, crying out in agony. Ursula is the one to begin their interaction, telling Ariel to come in, stating the reason why she is even there, and offering a simple solution to her problem.

> Ursula: **Come in**. **Come in**, my child. We **mustn't lurk** in doorways – **it's rude**. One might question your upbringing.
>
> Now, then. **You're here because** you have a thing for this human. This, er, prince fellow. Not that I blame you – he is quite a catch, isn't he?
>
> Well, angel fish, **the solution to your problem is simple**. **The only way** to get what you want is to become a human yourself.

Throughout the scene, Ursula is doing most of the talking. After the above example, Ariel asks a simple, short question ("Can you do that?"), which prompts Ursula to sing a song explaining how her vocation life is helping "unfortunate merfolk" – framing herself as benevolent and helpful. During the song, Ariel does not say a word, and the two times that Ursula asks questions are immediately answered by herself ("*True? Yes*", "*And I help them? Yes I do*"). Once she finishes the song and explains her offer, she brings up payment.

> Ursula: Oh – and there is one more thing. We haven't discussed the subject of payment. You can't get something for nothing, you know.
>
> Ariel: But I don't have any –
>
> Ursula: I'm not asking much. Just a token, really, a trifle. You'll never even miss it.

Here, Ursula interrupts Ariel, not only verbally by talking over her, but also physically, as she puts one of her tentacles over Ariel's mouth. She interrupts her again in the following exchange:

Ariel: But without my voice, how can I –

Ursula: You'll have your looks! Your pretty face! And don't underestimate the importance of body language! Ha!

After this, Ursula finishes her song, persuades Ariel to sign the contract, and performs the spell which literally takes Ariel's voice away, thus completely usurping the shared language space between them. Ursula consistently takes up most of the visual space as well, most obviously in that she is shown as larger than Ariel. Moreover, in almost every shot they share, Ursula is the focus, a dynamic agent moving freely over the space, swimming over and behind Ariel, while the little mermaid remains stationary and silent.

In addition to such dominance, villains will use commanding language, with strong illocutionary force in terms of asserting and ordering. The already mentioned scene between Frollo and Quasimodo merits another look with this in mind. The conversation begins with Frollo interrupting a previous scene, dramatically shifting the mood.

Frollo: Good morning, Quasimodo.

Quasimodo: Ah – um – good… m-morning, master.

Frollo: Dear boy, whomever are you talking to?

Quasimodo: My… friends.

Frollo: I see. And what are your friends made of, Quasimodo?

Quasimodo: Stone.

Frollo: Can stone talk?

Quasimodo: No.

Frollo: That's right. You're a smart lad. Now… lunch.

            Shall we review your alphabet today?

	(…)
	Excuse me?
Quasimodo:	Forgiveness!
Frollo:	You said… festival.
Quasimodo:	No!
Frollo:	You are thinking about going to the festival.
Quasimodo:	It's just that… you go every year.
Frollo:	I'm a public official. I must go! But I don't enjoy a moment. Thieves and cutpurses, the dregs of humankind, all mixed together in a shallow, drunken stupor.
Quasimodo:	I didn't mean to upset you, master.

He asks Quasimodo with whom he is talking, and whether gargoyles made of stone can even talk. Once established that they, indeed, cannot, Frollo says "Now, lunch". This is obviously a well-rehearsed command, as Quasimodo immediately jumps to set the table. Visually, the imbalance of power between the two characters is made explicit by the choice of cutlery – fine silver for Frollo, and worn-out wood for Quasimodo. With the ensuing alphabet review and the song discussed above, Frollo is the one to begin each new topic, to which Quasimodo briefly responds. Frollo speaks more and in longer, more complex sentences. Additionally, he speaks with conviction, with no hedges or hesitations – while in nearly all his utterances, Quasimodo stutters, hesitates, or apologizes for something. Finally, the song that follows provides a musical clue about the characters' power relations – after Frollo's request that Quasimodo remembers Frollo's lessons, they both sing, with Frollo taking the lead, and Quasimodo serving as his back vocal, faintly repeating his master's statements.

Frollo:	*You are deformed*
Quasimodo:	*I am deformed*
Frollo:	*And you are ugly*
Quasimodo:	*And I am ugly*

	(…)
Frollo:	*Why invite their calumny and consternation? / Stay in here, be faithful to me*
Quasimodo:	*I'm faithful*
Frollo:	*Grateful to me*
Quasimodo:	*I'm grateful*

We see in the above examples that power is signaled through language not only by the use of imperatives and other illocutionary acts, but most importantly by a positioning of participants in terms of who speaks, when, how long and in what manner. This is achieved also through terms of address, that is, the ways in which characters address and describe others. In addition to further unveiling some of the power (im)balance discussed above, how characters refer to one another also reveals their attitude towards others and the world in general.

4.2.4. Treatment of others and the world

Referring back to conclusions from the field of evolutionary psychology (Kjeldgaard-Christiansen, 2015), one of the most obvious markers of villainy is an antisocial attitude. With this in mind, villains will usually be shown as individuals isolated from society in some way, which may be self-imposed or a consequence of previous nefarious actions against others. Paired with this isolation is an unwillingness to help society, or an outright desire to somehow destruct it. The most apparent way of demonstrating such an attitude towards the world is found in how villains address and describe those around them.

Unsurprisingly, villains are much more likely to use insulting language than heroes. Interestingly, they are also more likely to use terms of endearment. This juxtaposition points to the aforementioned dual nature – firstly, their antisocial behavior, resentment and lack of respect for others, and secondly, their attempts at appearing precisely the opposite, as sympathetic and non-threatening.

Of course, the need for villains to be clearly understood as such by wide audiences means that many of the more positive ways of address are laden with dramatic irony, and intended in a disdainful way. For example, when speaking about Ariel and her father, Ursula uses their formal titles, but in an emphasized mocking tone which is an indicator of her belief that she would be a better ruler than them. This ironizing tendency is taken further with her saccharine addresses to Ariel, calling her "angel fish", "sweetcakes", "my dear, sweet child", and so on. The exaggerated tone and facial expressions accompanying these addresses are enough to cue audiences into the falseness behind them. This falseness is made even more explicit by how she speaks of others when they are not around, or when she is frustrated. Her villain song is a good example of this. Explaining how she has reformed and become someone who uses her knowledge of magic for the good of those in need, she describes them to Ariel as "*miserable, lonely, and depressed*" and then leans and whispers to Flotsam and Jetsam: "*Pathetic*". In such instances, there is no irony behind sweet facades – she uses direct insults, often pairing them with the adjective "little", adding another linguistic layer to her presentation as larger and more commanding than the heroes.

Ursula:	*I use it on behalf / Of the miserable, lonely, and depressed / [**Pathetic**] / Poor, unfortunate souls*
Ursula	The **little tramp**! Oh, she's better than I thought.
Ursula:	Don't fool with me, you **little brat**! Contract or no – Why, you **little troll**!

Furthermore, the choice of how to address others demonstrates the characters' attitudes towards the world and its inhabitants on a more general level, often revealing bigotry, racism, and a lack of respect towards those considered different or subhuman. Frollo's constant denigration of "gypsies" is in one scene paired with visual cues in quite a suggestive way. Receiving Phoebus, the new captain of the guard, Frollo takes him to the palace balcony and there explains his issues with the gypsies. As he talks about how he has been "taking care of them, one… by… one", each of the last three words is accentuated with a

longer pause, and accompanied by the visual of Frollo's fingers crushing three ants. Stating his theory that the gypsies have a "nest" within Paris, he lifts up one of the balcony boards, revealing an entire colony of ants beneath. His prejudice against this ethnic group is so strong that he literally cannot conceive of them as human, seeing them instead as heathens who are practically animalistic in their lifestyle and practices.

Frollo:	Look, Captain – **gypsies**. The **gypsies** live outside normal order. Their **heathen** ways inflame the peoples' lowest instincts, and they must be stopped.
	(…)
	Oh, the real war, Captain, is what you see before you. For twenty years, I have been taking care of the **gypsies**, <u>one… by… one</u>. And yet, for all of my success, they have thrived. I believe they have a safe haven, within the walls of this very city. A **nest**, if you will.

Finally, the discussion will end here with Hades, a villain who uses the least straightforwardly insulting language. However, his terms of endearment throughout the film are accompanied by an imbalance of power, and usually aimed at Meg – who has literally sold her soul to him, and therefore is completely subordinated to him. Just as with Ursula, many of these names are paired with the adjective "little", furthering the power gap between the two characters. For others, such as Hercules and Zeus, he frequently uses diminutive language in a way that is not directly offensive, but still betrays a clear lack of respect.

Hades:	**Meg, my little flower, my little bird, my little nut – Meg.**
Hades:	By the way, **Herc**, is she not, like, a fabulous little actress?
Hades:	I'm the one giving orders now, **bolt boy**.

5. CONCLUSION

We cannot underestimate the importance of stories, nor their power to impart certain lessons on those who hear or see them. Nearly all knowledge an individual possesses was learned in one way or another through stories – from the improvised good-night tales told by parents during childhood to the broader cultural narratives one often does not even consider to be stories. In today's culture, where people are bombarded with a plethora of media and a practically innumerable amount of stories told through them, the importance of critically thinking about the messages behind these stories cannot be overstated. In particular, an examination into the portrayals of various villainous characters, who are of necessity presented as abhorrent and fundamentally wrong, may uncover deeply rooted attitudes towards certain social groups.

Language plays a crucial role in such portrayals. It is clear that villains indeed have a discourse of their own, different to that of other character types. Some features of such a cultural model of villainy have been discussed above and bear repetition here. One of the most readily apparent elements within this villainous discourse is the characters' accent. Standard American English (SAE) accent was established to be the neutral baseline in this corpus. Of course, such a conclusion is hardly unexpected, with all the films being produced by an American company. However, this baseline merits pointing out, as any deviance from it is likely conscious and intended to produce certain effects. Sometimes, these effects are related to setting, with some characters speaking in particular accents in order to evoke a particular culture and provide a more immersive viewing experience. At other times, though, these effects are related to particular character types, such as the villains.

If such effects are created by continuous stereotypical portrayals – for example, of New Yorkers as tough guys with a funny side, or villains as evil Brits, with both of these

being evident in the corpus of this study – some unconscious associations may be created between particular social groups and particular character types. If learned early, and repeated frequently through the development of well-known schemes and clichés, these associations may persist throughout one's lifetime, informing one's opinion on certain communities and perception of their innate characteristics.

What the examined corpus has shown is that SAE is not only treated as a *neutral* baseline but is in fact given positive connotations, with the overwhelming majority of the primary protagonists conforming to this norm. Of eighteen protagonists and their love interests, only one speaks in an accent that is not the standard American. Interestingly, this is also the only of the eighteen characters to speak in a setting-appropriate accent. Other characters – regardless of whether they hail from mythical kingdoms, France, pre-Columbian America, African savannahs and jungles or the Middle East – all speak in a standard American accent. This is especially suggestive when compared to the villains' accents – of the nine primary antagonists, only two are SAE-speaking, while most of them are foreign.

Such a situation reveals an underlying ideology about language and what constitutes "good" language. Paired with particular portrayals of particular social groups, this may have strong and lasting effects on general attitudes. The discourse analysis shown above has confirmed that villains are not only shown as deviating from the norm by their accents, but also by their appearances: usually being presented as older, ethnic or with ethnicized features, frequently queer-coded and, crucially, foreign. Furthermore, these characters were all shown to be deceptive and disrespectful in how they treat others, as well as having a significant amount of power over them, which they readily abuse when given the chance. When all of the above is examined in the context of what evolutionary psychologists have said to be a typical villainous portrayal – a person who is foreign, selfish, sadistic, and disgusting – worrying tendencies are revealed.

The connotations of associating villains with deviation from the norm, power, and abuse of others are particularly problematic in what is purported to be a multicultural society, especially looking at current issues such as immigration and the resurgence of nationalist movements. In the United States – the home of Disney and its films – the current president was elected on a platform that included a promise to build a wall between the US and Mexico, and has consistently shown himself to be sympathetic to the alt-right movement, which revived the ideals of white supremacy and genuinely points to German national socialism as a positive government model. While both these examples are still largely seen as ridiculous extremes by the general populace, they represent the changing cultural climate and a growing rejection of a multicultural society – a trend which is especially dangerous when contemporary media regularly shows villains to be linguistically and visually Other than the norm.

Finally, it should be noted that we have dealt with a limited sample here, and some changes are likely to have taken place between the decade in which these films were produced and contemporary times. Additional research would reveal whether the tendencies described in this paper persist today or if the discourse of villainy described here is a reflection of a particular time, place, and context. Subsequent research might take into consideration larger corpora – for example, the totality of Disney (and Pixar) animated features, or all of the company's current acquisitions, including massively popular and wide-reaching franchises like Marvel and Start Wars. This thesis, therefore, represents merely a first – and hopefully not the last – step in a more comprehensive sociolinguistic study of character discourses.

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APPENDICES

Table 1. First viewing form

FILM	POSITIVELY CODED	NEGATIVELY CODED	OTHER / NEUTRAL
The Little Mermaid			
Beauty and the Beast			
Aladdin			
The Lion King			
Pocahontas			
The Hunchback of Notre Dame			
Hercules			
Mulan			
Tarzan			

Table 2. List of characters for analysis and their categorizations

FILM	A	A1	A2	O (-)	P	P0	P1	P2	O (+)
The Little Mermaid (1989)	Ursula	Flotsam & Jetsam		Louis	Ariel	Eric	Sebastian	Triton	Carlotta
							Flounder	Grimsby	*Ariel's sisters* (2)
							Scutle		Seahorse
Beauty and the Beast (1991)	Gaston	Lefou		Monsieur d'Arque	Belle	Beast	Lumiere	Maurice	Wardrobe
							Cogsworth	Chip	Featherduster
							Mrs Potts		
Aladdin (1992)	Jafar	Iago	Guard 1	P. Achmed	Aladdin	Jasmine	Genie	Sultan	
		Gazeem	Guard 2						
The Lion King (1994)	Scar	Shenzi			Simba	Nala	Timon	Zazu	Sarabi
		Banzai					Pumbaa	Rafiki	
							Mufasa		
Pocahontas (1995)	Ratcliffe				Pocahontas	John Smith	Powhatan	Thomas	Kocoum
							Nakoma	Ben	Kekata
							G. Willow	Lon	
The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1996)	Frollo		Brutish Guard		Quasimodo	Esmeralda	Phoebus	Hugo	Clopin
			Oafish Guard					Victor	Archdeacon
								Laverne	
Hercules (1997)	Hades	Pain	*The Titans* (4)	Nessus	Hercules	Meg	Phil		Amphytrion
		Panic	Cyclops						Alcmene
			The Fates (3)						Zeus
									Hera
									Hermes
									The Muses (3)
Mulan (1998)	Shan Yu	*Elite Huns* (5)		Chi Fu	Fa Mulan	Li Shang	Mushu	Yao	Fa Zhou
				Matchmaker				Ling	Fa Li
								Chien Po	Grandmother Fa
									Ancestor 1
									Emperor
									General Li
Tarzan (1999)	Clayton				Tarzan	Jane	Terk	Kala	Flynt & Mungo
							Tantor	Kerchak	
								Prof. Porter	

Table 3.1. Accent coding form: character categories A, P, and P0

A	SAE / NSAE / FE	P	SAE / NSAE / FE	P0	SAE / NSAE / FE
Ursula		Ariel		Eric	
Gaston		Belle		Beast	
Jafar		Aladdin		Jasmine	
Scar		Simba		Nala	
Ratcliffe		Pocahontas		John Smith	
Frollo		Quasimodo		Esmeralda	
Hades		Hercules		Meg	
Shan Yu		Fa Mulan		Li Shang	
Clayton		Tarzan		Jane	

Table 3.2. Accent coding form: character categories A1, A2, and O (-)

A1	SAE / NSAE / FE	A2	SAE / NSAE / FE	O (-)	SAE / NSAE / FE
Flotsam & Jetsam		Guard 1		Louis	
Lefou		Guard 2		Monsieur d'Arque	
Iago		Gazeem		Prince Achmed	
Shenzi		Brutish Guard		Nessus	
Banzai		Oafish Guard		Chi Fu	
Pain		*The Titans*		Matchmaker	
Panic		Cyclops			
Elite Huns		*The Fates*			

Table 3.3. Accent coding form: character categories P1, P2, and P (-)

P1	SAE / NSAE / FE	P2	SAE / NSAE / FE	O (+)	SAE / NSAE / FE
Sebastian		Triton		Carlotta	
Flounder		Grimsby		*Ariel's sisters*	
Scuttle		Maurice		Seahorse	
Lumiere		Chip		Wardrobe	
Cogsworth		Sultan		Featherduster	
Mrs Potts		Zazu		Sarabi	
Genie		Rafiki		Kocoum	
Timon		Thomas		Kekata	
Pumbaa		Ben		Clopin	
Mufasa		Lon		Archdeacon	
Powhatan		Hugo		Amphytrion	
Nakoma		Victor		Alcmene	
Grandmother Willow		Laverne		Zeus	
Phoebus		Yao		Hera	
Phil		Ling		Hermes	
Mushu		Chien Po		*The Muses*	
Terk		Kala		Fa Zhou	
Tantor		Kerchak		Fa Li	
		Professor Porter		Grandmother Fa	
				Ancestor 1	
				Emperor	
				General Li	
				Flynt & Mungo	