Cover Page

"JUSTICE!": REPRESENTATIONS OF ROMANI WOMEN IN THE WALT DISNEY PICTURES' ADAPTATION OF *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME* (1996)

By

Evelyn Oldham

Submitted to

Central European University

Department of Gender Studies, and

University of York

Centre for Women's Studies

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

Erasmus Mundus MA in Women's and Gender Studies (GEMMA)

Supervisor: Angéla Kóczé, Central European University (main supervisor), and

Rachel Alsop, University of York (supporting supervisor)

Vienna, Austria

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GEMMA Consortium Page

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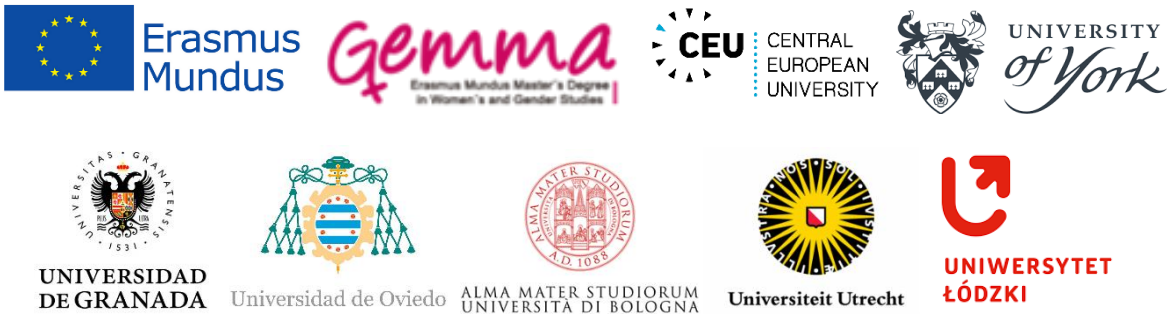

Abstract

This paper utilizes a critical feminist discourse analysis in combination with a feminist film critique and feminist art criticism, in order to create a multi-faceted analysis of the Walt Disney Pictures' 1996 animated children's film, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame,* to contend with its representations of Romani women. Drawing on Black feminist thought and an intersectional critique of the film's depictions, this analysis considers how both racialization and sexualization shape Romani women as women of color in film. The paper further considers how stereotypes about and archetypes of Romani women in particular, and women of color more generally, are utilized as the often-unchallenged totality of Romani women, particularly the further that these characters are from the main character position. The placement of Esmeralda - as the secondary main character and therefore lead Roma and woman - offers a wider breadth of roles which Romani women can fulfill, with deeper thematic purpose and characterization, though she does not escape the confines imposed by the intersection of her race and gender in how she was designed, animated, characterized, and ultimately produced. Alternative ways of conceiving of and portraying Romani women are, however, presented in the next, and a way forward is offered in the form of future collaborations that could generate female Romani characters with more nuance and depth.

Keywords: Romani women, Disney, gender, race, film

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank a number of people for their support throughout my studies and this Master's program especially.

Firstly, to my K-12 teachers for inspiring me to love learning and sharing knowledge - especially my English and Language Arts teachers, who first introduced me to film analysis and sparked a new layer of critical thinking in my life. Also, to my professors, past and present, particularly throughout this Master's program, and especially my supervisors Angéla Kóczé and Rachel Alsop, for all they have done to encourage me to go further. Thank you all for amazing classroom experiences, engaging discussions, big ideas, challenges to oppressive systems, feminist community, and a place where I could belong, even when I am an ocean from home and spread across three different countries. I am a better student, better scholar, and (hopefully soon) a better teacher because of all that you have shown me.

Thank you also to the most incredible classmates and friends that I could have hoped for. This Master's would not have been half as enriching and fulfilling as it was if I had not had the best groups of people to share it with. My life has changed for the better because I was able to meet all of you, and I hope you know that you always have a home wherever I am, and I am so lucky to have you all in my life. To my GEMMAs at York, the Gender Studies 2022-2023 group at CEU, and my RSP Family -- thank you for all the love, laughs, and light. You have made these two years something truly magical.

Thank you to the broader Centre for Women's Studies, Department of Gender Studies, and Romani Studies Program, as well, for fostering our growth and our joy. Thank you to all the faculty and staff who make our studies possible, who do battle for us, who cheer us on, who are constantly behind the scenes and at the front of the lines to make our lives better and easier - our programs would be nothing without you and all your work.

Thank you especially to my mom, who has twice flown with me to another continent, moved me in, explored new cities by my side, and been a rock for me over the experiences that came after her departure each time. Thank you for raising me to be brave and bold - even when it scared you - and for helping me to achieve so much, encouraging me even when most of what I do is new to you. I am so lucky to have a parent like you.

Thank you to all my friends back home for catch-up calls and hectic scheduling, for keeping me in the loop of your lives, and for being so wonderful. Thank you to my sisters and

Nanny, for more consistent but no less all-over-the-place-in-planning calls, for double-checking that we still knew what my thesis topic was before I launched into the nuances of it, and for following along on some of the most fun and most ridiculous and most exciting experiences in my life - it wouldn't be the same without you to share it with.

Thank you to my family for giving me a Disney childhood, and for listening to my stories from a Master's abroad these past two years. And thank you for setting up my cardboard cut-out at family events, giving me a call, and making sure I was a part of things, even from thousands of miles and multiple time zones away. I love you all, and I hope you know that watching movies with me will always be an analytical affair (so learn to love that too <3).

Last but not least, thank you to my partner, Jojo, for being my cheerleader, my sounding board, and my front-row audience member. Thank you for watching Disney movies with me, when I fall asleep halfway through, and talking media with me, when we deep dive and over-explain and lose track of where we started. And thank you for your counterproductive but deeply appreciated dedication to my original conceptions of this thesis when the cutting stage of editing came out, and for the reminder that there is still a PhD and probably several books on this topic to come, so I don't have to despair over what I removed. Glad to have A Guy Like You (get it? That's one of the songs in the movie! You're welcome! :))

Declaration

I, Evelyn Oldham, declare that this is my original, previously unpublished work, of which I am the sole author. It contains no external material, except for what has been properly cited and referenced. The work contained herein has been the product of my Master's degree, and has not been submitted for a previous degree at any institution prior.

I further declare that the following word count is accurate:

Word count (text of thesis only, excluding notes and references): 31,555

Word count (entire manuscript): 36,381

And I finally declare that, by typing my name below, I am attaching my name to this declaration formally.

Signature**: Evelyn Oldham**

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Introduction

This paper shall examine the representations of Romani women in Walt Disney Pictures' *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), and how they are related to stereotypical and archetypal depictions of women of color. For the general understanding of this paper, the Roma are an ethnic group found across the world, but with particularly high concentrations in Europe, where they migrated starting around 1,000 years ago from Northern India in a series of waves that spanned several centuries. Since arriving in the continent, Romani people have faced a multitude of violent discriminatory practices, including but not limited to killings, forced relocations, sterilization, slavery, and more; despite this, they have persisted to form international coalitions and a multinational activist movement, which continues growing and gaining in traction to this day (for additional information on the Roma, see: Marushiakova and Popov (2001), and Hancock (2006), Kovats and Law (2018); for further information on discriminatory practices against the Roma, see: Hancock (2001), About (2014), Kende, Hadarics, and Lášticová (2017), McGarry (2017), and Wisely (2019); for more about Romani activism, see: Aihwa (1988), Izsák (2009), Kóczé and Trehan (2009), Brooks (2012), Oprea (2012), and Gheorghe (2014)).

This paper focuses on film studies - and Disney films, particularly - due to the wide reach in audience, and the influence which films have on people's lives and their worldview. Garlen and Sandlin (2016) argue in the collection, *Teaching with Disney*, that due to Disney's domination of media, the company has a large impact on what children learn about the world around them. It is therefore vital for researchers to understand the importance of messages embedded in the media of a corporation that holds an ever-increasing monopoly in the U.S., and around the globe. Due to its size and power, Disney media is also able to serve as a way to identify and analyze trends in representation, which can then be dissected in less-familiar media through commonalities associated with the industry giant. This paper specifically looks at Romani women, a still understudied demographic in film, and how they may relate to other women of color - especially Black women - in their representations on screen, in order to further collaborative approaches to comprehending how the intersection of race and gender inform a character, her presentation, her reception, and her influence. This analysis will serve as means to determine where Romani women are still limited by the representation which is common for them, especially in children's and family film, and its conclusion as well as

analytical sections throughout the thesis shall consider ways in which to disrupt, subvert, complicate, and/or overthrow the one-dimensional, heterogeneous, racialized, and sexualized portrayals of them, as taken from this version of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Ultimately, while the film made critical strides from the novel's presentation of Romani women - especially for Esmeralda and her conversion into a more dynamic character with a stronger personality and deeper social justice goals - there were still crucial gaps in representation that there are multiple avenues open for a way towards more nuanced representation especially in terms of grappling with the intersection of race and gender and its influence in film.

The research question under examination is: *How are Romani women represented in Walt Disney Pictures'* The Hunchback of Notre Dame, *and why - what influences these portrayals, and to what degree?* In answering this question, this thesis shall review in its first analytical chapter how the Disney film was adapted from the novel by Victor Hugo which served as the source material, examining the role of the main character, changes made from the original novel (especially in relation to Quasimodo's parents, Esmeralda's origins and personality, and the plot itself), and items carried across both versions (such as relationships between Esmeralda and Quasimodo, Esmeralda and Frollo, and Frollo and Quasimodo with attention given to Esmeralda's role in this relationship, along with the use of stereotypes and epithets). The second and third analytical chapters shall focus on the film analysis itself, with the second chapter addressing Romani women as supporting characters, and the third chapter looking at Esmeralda. In the second chapter, the focus is first on Quasimodo's mother - and her depiction as being loving and protective, and sacrificial within the lines of the archetype of missing parents in Disney films, ending with a delve into her significance within the film - as well as other Female Romani Characters in the film - particularly the appearances and actions of the Romani women in the Court of Miracles, as well as an examination of those outside the Court, and the significance of these women as well. And in Esmeralda's chapter, a mostly comparative approach will be adopted to demonstrate Esmeralda's positioning within the wider Disney cinematic world: in seeing her in relation to other Disney characters based on factors such as the male gaze and its influence in Phoebus's and Esmeralda's first meeting as well as the Disney princesses' manifestations, and in conceiving what it means to be a princess of color in this context, and how the role of villainy and color theory intersect in her appearance; in looking at her connection to the Virgin Mary, based on sharing an identity as outcasts, and through Mary's (failed) interventions with and ultimately punishment of Frollo due to his treatment of Esmeralda; and in the role of the seven capital virtues and vices in how Esmeralda

and Frollo embody each set, respectively, and the ways in which these two characters foil one another.

Conceptual Framework

My thesis will rely on discourse, film, and art analysis, through analyzing the Walt Disney Pictures' *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* 1996 film and its depictions of Romani women. Feminist film theory, Black feminist thought, and broader film critique serve as the basis for this analysis. Through these lenses, I will identify elements of the film - plot points, dialogue/lyrics, music, lighting, camera angles and shots, et cetera - along with wider thematic elements that establish the depictions of the female Romani characters, and what they may mean for the viewing audience.

The work done in feminist film theory is wide and varied, but for the purpose of this paper I will mainly consider the importance of the male gaze in cinema (as described by Laura Mulvey in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975), and expanded upon by Yuval-Davis, N. & Anthias, F. (1983), and Farrington (2003) to include the impact of race and class). The male gaze impacts the conceptualization, design, animation, characterization, and final result for characters that are created by - and for - male viewer's pleasure, and the role of race in particular cannot be ignored as Esmeralda was given the woman of color treatment in conceiving of her as especially sexualized, with a villain that struggles with lusting for her. The male gaze is thus a tool to establish the racialized and sexualized lenses through which women of color are depicted by creators and understood by audiences. It establishes how other characters interact with them, which social systems of oppression underpin representations and how they are mitigated or absorbed, and what messaging is being conveyed about womanhood, especially for women of color.

Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality will be utilized to examine the ways in which characters' multiple identities coalesce to inform their experiences in the film. Intersectionality is vital to understanding experiences and perceptions of women of color, and enable the sexualized racism and racist sexualization of Romani women (and other women of color) to be fully understood, rather than viewing either as unrelated to the other. This paper will consider how racialization and sexualization inform the representations of Romani women, and will often draw upon Black feminist theory to show how the struggles of women of color are interrelated, even across different contexts. Janell Hobson's pioneering Black feminist film critique - which considers how intersectionality influences depictions of women of color in

film, and additionally seeks to expand Mulvey (1975)'s conceptions of women in film to include a focus on women of color - will also be one of the roots for my analysis of Romani women in the film, as I consider how the visibility of Romani women on screen in a Disney film shapes the broader representation of this demographic in the cinematic - and real - world. Furthermore, I will explore how certain tropes and archetypes, especially those concerning women of color (the Strong Black Woman, the mother of color, the Madonna, the Whore, the Exotic Other (first defined by Said (1978), notably extended to the Roma by Lee (2000) and Marushiakova-Popova & Popov (2017)), et cetera) are both employed and challenged in the film. Interviews with members of the creative team for the film will be analyzed following Black feminist textual analyses, as well, especially as they discuss topics relevant to the depiction of Romani women within the film.

General film devices have long been established as effective tools which can shape emotional and psychological responses in the audience, and therefore influence their perceptions of film characters and events. This is especially true for music (Hoeckner, Wyatt, Decety, and Nusbaum 2011; Ansani, Marini, D'Errico, and Poggi 2020), lighting (Poland 2015), and camera angles and shots (Cores Sarría, Hale, and Lang 2021), as well as more obvious tools such as plot points, dialogue/lyrics, and characterization. Music is noted for its particular impact upon the feelings of the viewer, used to build tension, establish a connection between characters, underscore a significant moment, and other such effects within a film; in its absence for a particular scene, the gravity of a moment may be imparted upon the viewer (and listener) of the film, as the only sound upon which to focus is the dialogue or lack thereof between characters. Lighting is often used to convey the character of a person on screen, with darkness and shadow often associated with secrecy, malintent, and evilness, while light is used to convey heroics, hope, trust, benevolence, et cetera. Strategic lighting can also convey a mood (such as sad, loving, afraid, aware, and so on), as well as highlight an object, action, or emotion of particular importance in a scene. Camera angles and shots, particularly in combination with other filming techniques, can aid in showing emotion (largely in close ups, switchbacks, and slanted angles), the gravity of a scene (usually shown in wider angles that capture more information about a scene but often in less detail, due to the increased distance from the action and the facial expressions of the characters), and even the health status, mental struggles, or physical exertions of a character (as can be seen in moving shots especially, which often mirror the actions of a character is order to more intimately, literally carry the audience along with their state of being).

Additional focus will be given to affect (Slaby and von Scheve 2019), and the role of emotion in forming perceptions about Romani women within the films; this can be achieved through film effects as well as plot devices, and will serve as a significant underpinning of the stereotypes and other representations depicted on screen. Emotional connections to the characters, the role which they fulfill in the film, and their proximity to the main character and - by extension - the viewer all play a part in shaping the way which the audience feels towards one of the characters. This in turn shapes their perception of who that character is, whether they fall into the category of "good", "bad", or "morally gray", if they are someone to be liked or disliked, and if their plights and successes are something which the viewer is invested in and aligned with. This is a large part of shaping the final message which viewers take away from the representation of certain characters on screen, and can influence their beliefs about that character and who they represent long after the end of the film.

Literature Review

Drawing on the intersection of Romani women's gender and racial identities (Crenshaw 1989), and understanding these women are often posited as the sexual "exotic other" (Said 1978; Liddle and Rai 1998) as women of color, and subjected to both racialization and sexualization for their dual identities, this project will seek to understand how the conceptions of Romani women have shaped their film portrayals, and how their film portrayals have shaped societal perceptions of Romani women. Black feminist film studies will also be vital to understanding these intersections as well, and in analyzing the reciprocal role played between Romani women and films about them in forming discourse concerning their lived experiences. Feminist film critiques (including visual and auditory analysis of scenery, props, costuming, dialogue, music, lighting, etc.), coupled with Black feminist theory, will be used to analyze the film as the main basis of this project.

There have been studies into Romani representations in media conducted by human rights groups (Hammarberg 2011; Morris 2020) and academic researchers (Covert 2016; Oleaque 2022), which have established the importance of depictions in shaping how social narratives surrounding marginalized groups form. Specifically, these studies show how media depictions are used to create and reinforce stereotypes concerning marginalized groups, and to perpetuate certain sociopolitical agendas concerning Romani people in particular. Stereotypes such as Roma being thieves, criminals, beggars, tricksters, and swindlers are not uncommon in such media depictions, along with presentations of Romani women being sexually promiscuous, either very beautiful or very ugly, and a fetish for (white) men. Such stereotypes concerning Romani behavior have often been employed to further sociopolitical narratives of isolation, failed integration, and "Otherness", which perpetuates anti-Romani racism, that in turn fuels further reliance on and belief in stereotypical depictions of the Roma. Therefore, media's usage as a propaganda tool - largely employed against the Roma - has been established, though its expansion to a particular film and gender view was not much a focus in these sources.

These studies into the media's role in forming social thought concerning the Roma were furthered with specific focus on film representations of Romani people through the work of Stepanović (2020) and Covert (2016; specifically, chapter 4.6), in particular. Still mainly lacking a gender perspective, these two studies do delve deeper into how movies, as a media

consumed primarily for entertainment rather than knowledge or news, still convey a large amount of information concerning social, political, and economic relations based on how they are made and what content they contain. This information is then conveyed to the audience as a passive source of knowledge gain, and imparts upon them perceptions of Romani people which form part of their worldview and shape their sociopolitical actions. Thus, movies can serve as a significant source of social perspective, and have the capacity to reach greater audiences due to their branding as entertainment with a relatively apolitical nature in comparison to traditional news sources that may normally supplement a person's knowledge base. This is especially true for children's and family films, which are often considered to not have deeper sociopolitical meanings as they would be too difficult for children to grasp and/or too grim for adults to want their children to see - *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, however, certainly does not ascribe to this limitation.

Walt Disney Pictures' *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996) was hardly the first film made concerning Romani people and their relationship to wider society(ies). Particularly in Europe, films have depicted Romani people – and even centered on these characters and their stories – as part of the last several decades of filmography. Therefore, there has been scholarship concerning these depictions as well. *Roma on the Screen: The Roma on Europe's Cinema Screens – Images of Freedom* by Dominique Chansel (which even includes a look at an earlier, non-Disney adaptation of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*), offers an in-depth examination of Roma in European cinema, and considers how the regional film industries and their stylistic choices based on country and time period for the films have shaped the themes and characterizations for the Roma characters within. The articles contained within the collection consider the influence of socio-historical relationships with Roma in the continent, therefore deepening the contextualization for and development of the storylines they establish. In particular, there is focus given to the themes represented in European Romani films, namely those of rebellion, love, death, freedom, poverty, and grandiosity. These are wrapped up in contentions over what type of representation is given to Romani people in European films, and what greater social mechanisms are at work in these depictions. There are concerns over the universalizing nature of some films' relationship between Romani people and the difficult aspects of their persecution, particularly when there is not enough social commentary in said films to explain why Romani people may be forced into impoverished conditions or criminalized livelihoods, which resonates as a concern in the Disney adaptation of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. While the aspects considered in this volume are useful to bear in

mind for considering the Disney film and especially its work around racialized depictions of its Romani characters, the work fails to grapple with a gender and/or sexuality lens in its analyses, leading to a major oversight in its discussion.

Though few of these mentioned sources have a specifically gender-informed lens, Jovanović (2014) does examine the subject, in studying a campaign centered on self-presentations of Romani women on social media. Jovanović especially analyzes how the understanding of such a complex identity is often flattened in the forming of narratives surrounding this identity in media. And indeed, there is a notable absence of in-depth analysis of film portrayals of Romani women that consider the totality of their intersecting identities. This lack of attention to the full intersection of identities in these portrayals therefore is a knowledge gap that Black feminist research methods are designed to resolve. Thus, my paper would add a gender and race intersectional lens to the film analyses already conducted regarding the Roma, which would expand the feminist analyses of Romani media depictions as well.

Films on Romani women and the perceptions these films impart about Romani women are specifically understudied in the U.S. and family films' contexts, though some studies rely on commonalities in how other people of color and women of color are depicted, firmly placing Romani women among other racialized/ethnicized women in this context. Rucker-Chang (2018)'s look at African-Americans and Roma in their "post-"s' (U.S. 1960s Civil Rights Movement and the EU early 2000s Expansion and Roma Rights movement, respectively) film depictions is one such example. This work is perhaps one of the more tangible discussions of Romani portrayals for a U.S. audience, given its comparison to a more widely-known racial group in the country, which has been shown throughout cinematic history in the country. Rucker-Chang (2018) examined how social conditions informed the representations of Roma and other racial/ethnic groups, and how the "post-" part of the movements for civil and social rights has impacted (or rather, failed to impact) their real-life and on-screen inclusions. This comparison seeks to draw similarities between the two racial/ethnic groups in their most predominantly studied contexts (the U.S. and Southeastern Europe), as a means for showcasing the importance of "realistic aesthetics" as a means of highlighting injustices for the respective groups.

While Romani women in particular remain underrepresented in studies of women of color on screen in the United States, broader analysis and discussion of women of color - and

Black women in particular - are common. Scholars such as Wingfield & Mills (2012), Adams-Bass, Bentley-Edwards, & Stevenson (2014), and Mctaggart, N., Cox, V., & Heldman, C. (2021), among many others, have considered how Black women are depicted in video format. These three sources in particular seek to understand how representations of Black women and girls shape this demographic's understanding and perception of themselves, as part of having the identity of a Black woman or girl. In this manner, the broader social implications for the very group depicted are studied to understand the complicated nature of consuming media that is often limited, stereotypical, and/or negative, while grappling with the desire for richer and more nuanced representation but often unable to uncover such in mainstream films. Further investigations in Black women in media seek to intervene into these stereotypical portrayals, and scholars such as hooks (1992) and Woodard and Mastin (2005) seek to explore the ways that media - especially when arising from female Black creators and curators - could be a liberating experience for the women of color who consume it. However, given the predominantly white and male creative team that was involved in making *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), this perspective's power is one which my paper was not able to focus on as clearly.

Last but not least, The Walt Disney Company and its filmic productions have long been a topic for examination within film studies. The company has come to dominate media worldwide, but particularly in the United States, where it was founded and grew in influence and power across the decades. Its top positioning in family and children's films cannot be ignored, and its strength in crafting social narratives about those it depicts is especially relevant for this paper. There have been wider studies into children's media and that which it portrays as the social norm - such as heterosexual romance being a goal, particularly for women to achieve (Martin and Kazyak 2009), and the impact of gender roles being reinforced and challenged in different media sources (Flerx, Fidler, & Rogers 1976), for example. However, for children's and family films, Disney movies - in particular, those from its animation department - are often the ones dominating narratives about society, particularly in the United States context.

In *Teaching with Disney* (Garlen and Sandlin 2016), the contributors examine how Disney imparts onto its consumers ideas about gender, race, capitalism, and self-perception amid social perceptions. The gender chapters - Inman and Sellers's "The Disney Princess Dilemma: Constructing, Composing, and Combatting Gendered Narratives", and Reilly's "An

Encouraging Evolution Among the Disney Princesses? A Critical Feminist Analysis" - focus largely on Disney princesses as a social phenomenon, serving as role models for girls but often failing to critically engage with issues of female representation in film. Particularly given many of the Disney princesses' embracement of traditional gender roles, male gaze-defined features, and more passive roles in the development of the film - which only gradually began to be challenged, largely starting with the Disney Renaissance - the princesses' relationship to gender role-modeling has often been criticized and placed under intense focus.

In addition to the gender concerns which *Teaching with Disney* presents, Kee and Grant's chapter, "Disney's (Post?)-Racial Gaze: Film, Pedagogy, and the Construction of Racial Identities", aims to both grapple with the racist past and present of Disney and its depictions, while also complicating it with the consideration of how multiracial, multicultural, and multinational viewers may alter, disrupt, and challenge the racial and ethnic underpinnings, depictions, and assumptions of Disney films. This permits for reinterpretations and reframings of the films, that may open new doors to how the film engages with race altogether for some audiences; while this paper is focused on how a U.S. audience may interpret the film and its various representations of Romani women, it is entirely likely that a European audience would draw different elements into focus. Sharma's chapter, "Disney and the Ethnic Other: A Semiotic Analysis of American Identity", however, considers how an uncritical eye will passively accept depictions of "ethnic others", and Disney's role in perpetuating a (white) U.S.-centric conception of racial/ethnic identity, and positioning predominantly white voices at the center of their narratives. This chapter is complemented by Hurley (2005)'s article, "Seeing White: Children of Color and the Disney Fairy Tale Princess", which studies how color symbolism is employed in Disney films, and the impact it has upon children of color to see princesses of color as largely absent figures in Disney stories, with characters of color often being on the side of the villain, if they exist at all, particularly in earlier Disney films.

Methods

This work will rely on analysis of the female Romani characters in Walt Disney Pictures' *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, produced by Don Hahn. The film will serve as the main focus, but there will also be a preceding analytical chapter focused on how the film was adapted from the original source material, the novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* by Victor Hugo. Additionally, interviews and commentary from the creative team involved with the film will be utilized for additional insights into how the animated feature was built and what was intended with its production. These sources will allow for a closer examination into how Disney crafted its media, as well as how this product fit into wider Disney franchises (for example, the Disney princesses' lineup, which will also be considered for the part which Esmerelda played in it). Analyzing these Walt Disney Company materials, from inspiration to final iteration, enables this paper to see the process of crafting a Disney film in its full scope, as analyzed through a Black feminist media critique, to be described more in the subsequent Conceptual Framework section.

The materials will be analyzed through the use of feminist critical discourse analysis (namely as set forth by Lazar 2005), in the case of analysis for dialogue and song lyrics, and feminist art criticism for the visual elements of the film such as character design, lighting, and spatial relations. In combination with these two foundational approaches, at different points the analysis will be further complemented by music theory and color theory, for their respective fields, as well as the usage of camera framing devices, background, scenery, and props, in order to craft as full a picture of the film and its overlapping components as possible in the analysis conducted of Romani women's representations inside. Furthermore, comparative discursive and visual analyses will be made from within and outside of the film itself; when compared to outside elements, these will almost exclusively be components of the original source material (the novel by Victor Hugo), or previous Disney media, in order to establish connections to and breaks from content that has bearing upon the film under scrutiny.

The elements which were selected for analysis from the film were chosen largely based on the criteria of proximity to a female Romani character. Therefore, the components which will be discussed either include a Romani woman in them, are influenced by a Romani woman related to them, or will influence a Romani woman because of them; the reason for selection

of portions of the film will be provided, in order to make clear the connections being drawn by the author. The majority of elements under consideration feature intersections of racialization and sexualization of these female characters of color, and the analysis seeks to untangle what the representations mean within the context of the film produced, and the within the society that consumes the media in the manner of what messages are conveyed about Romani women through the film's representations of them.

The first step of this research was to compare Victor Hugo's novel, *Notre-Dame de Paris,* with the Disney animated film adaptation. A summary for each chapter of each book was made for the novel, then the events were placed in chronological order for ease of comparison, since the Disney narrative is linear. The Disney film was watched, and significant plot points with subsections containing the minutiae were made. In comparing the sets of notes for these two lists, broad character changes were noted to the side, and the plots of the two versions were compared for similarities and divergences; these were eventually compiled into their separate sections of the first chapter. Finer details of character changes and retentions were then noted, and also divided into their sections accordingly. The movie was then watched again with the chronological novel notes serving as a reference to catch any further points to be included in the analytical first chapter.

As part of the process of conducting a thorough, multi-faceted analysis of the film what would form the basis for the second and third analytical chapters - the film was watched several times with focus paid to the different aspects of the analysis (for example, the first watch would engage only with dialogue and lyrics, the second would examine visual components, the third would listen to the soundtrack, et cetera). This ensured the attention would not need to be split across too many elements to critically reflect upon at once; after all of the viewings were completed, the notes that had been divided based on what aspect the author was watching for where integrated into a chronological sequence of the movie, with consecutive parts placed together in their correct orders.

After integrating the notes on the film, observations were grouped according to themes that were based on the character in study and - if it was a Romani woman - how their representation fit into or broke out of stereotypes and/or archetypes for Romani woman and/or women of color, depending on which category it was. If the character was not a Romani woman, the observation was sorted based on how it related to the Romani woman(en) of the film, and what stereotypes and/or archetypes were engaged with through the connections

between characters. Additionally, film observations could fall into the category of thematic relevance or plot development, if they appeared at first glance to have less to do with confirmation or denial of the other categories. The lists were then separated by character, and the film was watched again once for each character identified, to serve as a final opportunity to catch any smaller details of a specific scene or of a character's arc across the film.

Positionality

I am a non-Romani, white woman from an upper-middle class family that was raised in the United States, positioning me as an outsider to the group which I am examining the depictions of. While I share a gender identity with these women - being cisgender and a woman - I do not experience any of the forms of racial/ethnic stereotyping or discriminatory beliefs or practices which I examine in my paper, nor do I have to deal with racial microaggressions. While I have, of course, studied Black feminist thought, Critical Romani Studies, Romani feminism, and earned my Master's degree in Gender Studies with an Advanced Certificate in Critical Romani Studies, this is not a substitute for lived experience. As such, it is not impossible - or even improbable - that some of the nuances of being a Romani woman and navigating the type of identity which I seek to analyze the representation of, may be lost in my analysis, despite efforts to minimize this potentiality.

I am, however, more similar in demographic and background to members of the creative team which worked on this film, namely in my national context, race, and socioeconomic status. I also grew up one city over from the Walt Disney World theme park (which is located just outside of Orlando, Florida), and spent many family vacations there as a child. I consider myself to have had a "Disney childhood", meaning my siblings and I were supplied with many opportunities to be consumers of Disney media, including films and associated merchandise, by our family. I grew up watching Disney films, especially animated ones, and watch the same films as comfort entertainment to this day; I can remember having a favorite Disney princess as far back as pre-school, and this was as important as having a favorite color or favorite subject in school; even as I grew older - and again, largely to this day - I and the rest of my family would often keep track of developments in and new products from The Walt Disney Company, especially its media and film projects, and we were often quick to become consumers of the latest releases. This does not, however, mean that I am uncritical of the company, or its products, and even as a child, my family would have discussions about the films we watched

and what messages they conveyed, a space for us children to ask questions and - as we grew older - to compare critiques and opinions on what we had just watched. Especially since the beginning of the Disney Revival (a period credited to have started with the launch of the 2009 film *The Princess and the Frog*, directed by Ron Clements and John Musker), I have been deeply interested in how Disney films subvert, reinforce, reconfigure, and reimagine fairy tales in particular, and throughout my feminist activism and studies in the subsequent years, this interest has only grown while my analyses of these films has been deepened by what I have learned in and out of the classroom.

Chapter 1: Forming the Film: Disney-fying Victor Hugo's novel

Unlike many other Disney films - especially of the Disney Renaissance time period and prior -Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996) was based not on a fairy tale, but on Victor Hugo's 1831 French Gothic novel, *Notre-Dame de Paris*. The idea for the animated feature film, according to directors Kirk Wise and Gary Trousdale in their directors' commentary film feature, came in 1993 from David Stainton, a development executive at the time, who presented it to then-studio chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg (1997). Stainton was said to have gotten the idea from reading the Classics Illustrated version of the novel by Victor Hugo, and it was from this comic book adaptation that he based his pitch to Katzenberg; Katzenberg was apparently enamored enough with the concept to pull in directors Wise and Trousdale - who had recently directed *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) for the studio - along with Alan Menken and Stephan Schwartz for musical and lyrical composition, after the duo having worked on Disney's *Pocahontas* (1995) together previously. Don Hahn was brought in as producer, having previously worked with Wise and Trousdale on *Beauty and the Beast*, and also having produced *The Lion King* (1994) and done animation work with the studio prior to his ascent to producer; Tab Murphy is credited with creating much of the animated film's story, serving as lead screenwriter along with Irene Mecchi, Bob Tzudiker, Noni White, and Jonathon Roberts (all four of whom contributed at least in part to *The Lion King*, the greatest commercial success of the Disney Renaissance films).

There were numerous changes which were made from the source material to the Disney animation adaption. The largest changes to plot and character arcs were attributed primarily to the change in audience, and what was suitable for children's and family media to be seen on screen, as Kirk and Trousdale shared in their directors' commentary of the film (1997). This translated into many of the novel's darker elements being removed altogether, or toned down or hidden off-screen or within innuendo that would bypass a younger audience. The plot was also significantly streamlined from the original novel, condensed into a series of events easier to follow and better able to hold the attention of a young viewer without there being lapses in action or entertainment. The directors' commentary is also filled with moments where the two share further scenes and ideas which had to be cut from the final edit due to time constraints,

concerns with pacing, and a desire to focus on Quasimodo over other characters when there was shared screen time (1997).

1.1: Whose Story is It?: The Role of the Main Character

Perhaps most notably, the decision to have Quasimodo as the main character of the film, rather than Esmeralda, gave shape to the story produced by Disney. The directors credit Tab murphy as advocating for this, and writing accordingly, to be in keeping with earlier film adaptations of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, such as the 1923 silent film directed by Wallace Worsley and starring Lon Chaney, and William Dieterle's 1939 film starring Charles Laughton, both by the same name and also produced in the United States. Yet, the earliest adaptations of the 1831 novel - including an opera entitled *La Esmeralda* by Louise Bertin, which premiered in 1836 and for which Victor Hugo himself contributed the libretto, although there were numerous other ballets, musical theater, and stage adaptations as well - focused Esmeralda as the main character. Additionally, most of the earliest film adaptations of the novel focused more on Esmeralda than any of the other characters, and were appropriately named, including two films called *Esmeralda* (one a 1905 French film, and one a 1911 British film, both silent) and one called *The Darling of Paris* from 1917 (also silent). The novel itself, after the fashion of several other works by Hugo, moves between multiple characters across several books, and it could be argued that Esmeralda and Quasimodo both serve as main characters at different parts of the book, alongside other characters at other parts such as Frollo or Phoebus or Pierre Gringoire (Esmeralda's husband in the book, who was cut from the movie adaptation, and there are other parts with no main character at all (Book 3, for example, is an overview of Notre Dame's history and architecture, while Book 5 opens on a long tangent about medieval judicial structure).

Having Esmeralda share a main character position in the novel, and following her point of view (even in third person narration), permits closer proximity to the character by the reading audience. It is noted that the more central a character is to the story, the more likely an audience member is to identify with them (Smeets 2021); this means that with Esmeralda as one of the more central characters in the novel, the reader is allowed a deeper connection to her, and a closer alliance with her thoughts, feelings, actions, hopes, fears, et cetera. This connection to Esmeralda would be even more true of the resulting early adaptations, where she remains the main character throughout the adaptation and does not have to share this status; as the main focus for the duration of the production, she would be even closer bonded to the audience, as

the funnel through which the entire opera, play, or movie was seen and interpreted; the viewers would have no choice but to understand the world through Esmeralda's eyes, because this would be the only point of view being given to them. The switch to Quasimodo as the sole main character in later film adaptations, and Disney's 1996 film as well, serves to shift Esmeralda to a supporting character, and more an objection of Quasimodo's (and other characters') attentions, than an actor in her own story, in her own right. The story becomes told through a man's lens, desiring Esmeralda and watching her throughout the story, and Esmeralda loses much of the agency and centrality which she is imbued with naturally by the story being hers in earlier works.

Disney gave a significant part of Esmeralda's agency back to her in how her character was reimagined, and how her interactions with other characters were altered for this adaptation, and she is granted her own "I Want" song within the story as well (a feature of the Disney Renaissance which is typically reserved solely for the main character, establishing her on more equal footing with Quasimodo than the other characters, though the story is still not focused on her to the same degree, especially evident in her lack of background while the opening song gives the audience Quasimodo's origins). Yet the removal of her perspective as the focal one does still limit information about her character being conveyed with the same ease and frequency as Quasimodo, and ultimately it is she who is a part of his story, and not the other way around. Moving her closer to the center of the narrative, and granting her more control over the events of the plot, is beneficial to the audience identifying with and rooting for Esmeralda and her ambitions, but Disney did elect to not have her as the most central figure to the story, so that if she and Quasimodo do have clashing desires (such as concerning who Esmeralda should fall in love with), there may result a split in audience's minds over who to side with, or they may side more with Quasimodo than with Esmeralda (such as feeling his heartbreak at not being chosen by Esmeralda, rather than feeling Esmeralda's joy at having found a suitable partner).

1.2: A Dark Novel to A Child's Delight: Changes Made

A large number of changes were made to the original novel in order to make a more family-friendly movie, as well as for the other reasons mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. For the purposes of this thesis, I will focus on the changes made to the female Romani characters, and those changes made to other characters as it pertains to these characters, starting with Quasimodo's parents.

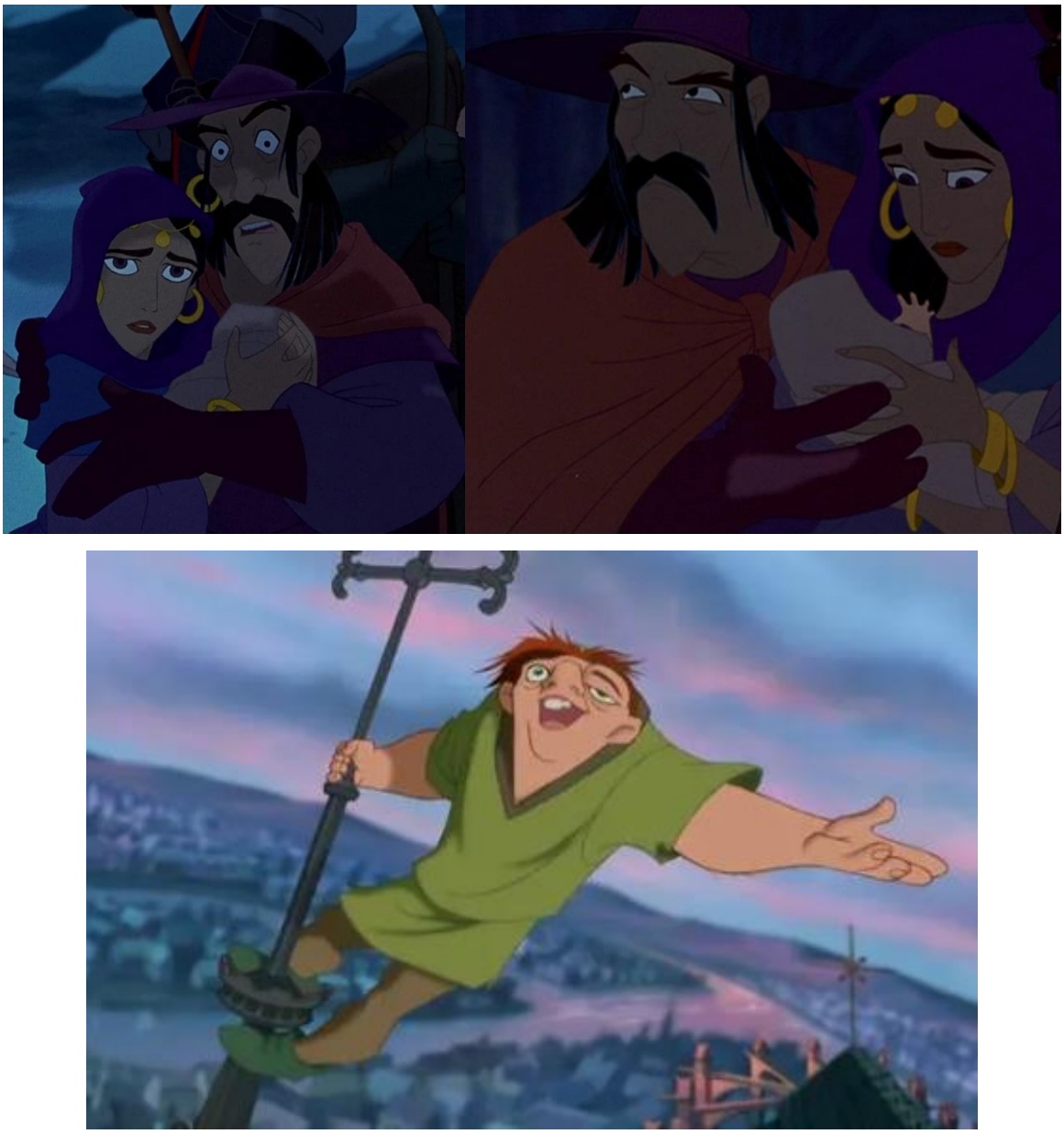
1.2.1: Quasimodo's Parents

In the novel by Victor Hugo, Quasimodo is born to Romani parents and is swapped with Esmeralda, due to his physical deformities and Esmeralda's apparent able-bodiedness and prettiness. There is no reflection made by Quasimodo's birth parents on any deeper reasonings for making this swap, and the woman who Quasimodo is left with - Esmeralda's birth mother - abandons Quasimodo at Notre Dame - likely due to the trauma of having her own daughter stolen and replaced, as well as her hatred for Roma in general, and for Quasimodo's appearance as well - to possibly be adopted by someone else. Claude Frollo, the archdeacon in the novel, does eventually take Quasimodo in, as he reminds Frollo of his own younger brother's plight when they were initially orphaned and Frollo had to raise him.

This cold-hearted abandonment of Quasimodo by his birth parents and Esmeralda's birth mother (who would have been Quasimodo's adoptive mother) does not reflect kindly on how he was treated, namely due to how he appeared. In medieval times, physical deformities were often considered the mark of the devil (as seen in Frollo's reaction to an infant Quasimodo's appearance in the film), as well as potentially too much work to care for when they would not grow up to become a family member which could contribute to the income and well-being of others in the same way. In this manner, Quasimodo's Romani birth parents are not the only ones who perceive Quasimodo as being unwanted in the novel. This attitude is not present in at least Quasimodo's mother in the film; while Quasimodo's father refers to Quasimodo as "it", and does not appear to have much concern for him, his mother risks increased punishment and loses her life in trying to defend her baby, likely knowing that his appearance will mark him for death or punishment during the late 15th century, when the novel and movie are set.

There is speculation - in part due to his father's callousness, but even more so due to his difference in appearance from his parents (his parents having darker skin, hair and eyes, while Quasimodo is white-passing, red-headed, and blue-eyed - see pictures below) - that Quasimodo may not be their biological child. This may be a continuance of the stereotypical novel's conception of Roma as stealing infants, although given Quasimodo's appearance, it is more likely that he may have been abandoned or given up and the man and woman at the start of the film chose to adopt him then. It is notable though, in this instance, simply because it would be an inversion of the original novel's origins for Quasimodo. This would therefore signal that the Roma not merely did not abandon Quasimodo when they saw how he looked, but they instead went out of their way to take him in and intended to raise him as their own

when they saw that he was an outcast at such a young age already. Either way, Romani women are clearly portrayed as being loving and protective mothers, as will be discussed in the next chapter.



Images taken as screenshots from Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), directed by Kirk Wise and Gary Trousdale.

1.2.2: Esmeralda's Origins

Esmeralda - whose origins in the movie are unspecified - is nonetheless clearly Romani based on her appearance and her relationship to other Roma, most notably Clopin (the seeming leader of the Roma in Paris). This creates her as a Romani woman, then, and not simply a woman raised among Roma, as in the novel. She identifies with the term "gypsy" (the only

term in the movie used to identify Romani characters) and its accompanied community, and she performs with Roma musicians in her opening scene and appears to live in the Court of Miracles with the other Roma when Quasimodo and Phoebus arrive there later on in the film. Additionally, when she speaks of the Roma community in Paris, she often uses possessive pronouns ("my people", for example). Therefore, she is definitively a Romani woman, both self-identifying and being socially recognized as one.

Additionally, Esmeralda is noticeably older in the movie as compared to the novel. In the novel, she was the youngest character among those mentioned (only 16, being switched with Quasimodo when she was an infant and he was around four years old), whereas in the movie she is at least in her 20s, based on appearance and her general experience with the world, as well as being inferred by her relationships to other characters (such as calling Quasimodo a "boy" when he is 20, implying she is older than him by more than a few years to see their age difference as significant enough for this name, although its use could have also been in reference to his innocent nature, especially as it was used to refer to him when speaking to Frollo; Phoebus's double entendre reference to her goat, Djali, when he says he "didn't know" that she had a "kid" (which is the name for a baby goat, but also a not uncommon remark for single mothers to receive when introducing a romantic partner to their child, which implies that Esmeralda would be old enough that it would not be strange for her to have a child of a similar autonomy to Djali; and her attraction to Phoebus, among her three possible suitors, with whom she is shown to have the most natural chemistry, which is often shared between people of closer ages and certainly in Disney films, and the audience knows that Phoebus is at least "a few decades" old, since that is the last time he says he has been in Paris at the beginning of the film, and he left when he was at least the age of majority, to serve in an unspecified war). This increased age leads to some of the additional changes made regarding Esmeralda's personality and actions throughout the film.

1.2.3: Esmeralda's Personality

Esmeralda is seen to be significantly less naive than she was in the novel, as well as worldlier and emotionally mature. At no point is she taken advantage of or deceived by any of the men in the film, when in the novel she was particularly ensnared by Phoebus and due to his manipulations she nearly lost her vow of chastity (which appears to not be a facet of her personality in the movie, as it is never mentioned in any capacity, and her reason for adopting it in the novel - her desire to find her parents first - is not a concern for her in the film either). She also is not fooled by Frollo saying that he was imagining her hanging when he grabs her

in the cathedral and smells her hair in the film, exclaiming, "I know what you were imagining!" as she pulls away from him, clearly implying that she sees through him to the lust he is trying to suppress for her; in the novel, there is little indication that she fully understands how men view her, or if so, it is secondary to her concerns about Phoebus (who she is unable or unwilling to understand does not care for her beyond as a "conquest").

She is not so naive or innocent in the film as to be unaware of her sexuality and sexual appeal either, and indeed weaponizes it in her dancing - particularly against Frollo and the crowd at the Feast of Fools, much to her monetary gain. While she may still be sexualized and fetishized by other characters (particularly Frollo), she is aware of this sexualization, and at various points in the movie she uses others' perceptions of her good appearance and supposedly frail feminine form to aid in her plans (such as when she kisses Quasimodo on the cheek to stop him rambling and trying to prevent himself from having a positive relationship with someone other than his imaginary gargoyle friends, or when she pretends to dissolve into tears over "what's a poor girl to do?" when she is outnumbered by the guards coming after her on Frollo's order at the Feast of Fools yet then uses it as a distraction to outwit and escape the guards). Her control over her own sexuality, however, does lead to Frollo associating her more closely with witchcraft and devilry, though, especially as he cannot conceive of how else he would be attracted to someone - let alone a Romani woman - unless he were under a spell or curse by her.

Esmeralda's desperate desire for Phoebus, at risk to - and eventually loss of - her own life, sanity, and agency, certainly is not a defining feature of her in the film. She is not seen to be crying over whether he loves her or not, or if he will be with her; she does not teach Djali special tricks to spell out Phoebus's name; Esmeralda does not constantly follow Phoebus around, nor make a spectacle of herself to try to attract his attention (it is reversed, actually, that when she is dancing in the streets, she never fails to gain his attention and hold him captive); she is not obsessed at the idea of love, nor even make much indication that she is pursuing a romantic connection with Phoebus until he humbles himself in the cathedral and admits to his feelings first after she rescues him from drowning in the river; and overall, she is seen to be perhaps the most in charge of her emotions and subsequent actions of the four most central characters in the film (herself, alongside Quasimodo, Frollo, and Phoebus, the three of whom are significantly more ensnared by her than she is by any of them).

As part of being worldlier, Esmeralda is also less trusting of other characters, especially at first. She and the other Romani performers expect issues with Frollo's guards around the city, and try to run or fight them off when they approach; when Quasimodo falls into her tent,

she yells, “Hey!” and covers her body, as she was changing and expected him to being intentionally ripping down her changing screen; when she discovers Phoebus in the cathedral, she expects a fight and is wary that he is not there to arrest her; and, she expresses to the Archdeacon anger and frustration and a general mistrust of the other Parisians’ motives and what is in their hearts after how they treated Quasimodo. This sentiment of distrust is, however, shown to be founded: guards harass Esmeralda, other characters sexualize her, Frollo attempts to seize her in the cathedral with guards, and other Parisians pray for selfish reasons in Esmeralda’s song, “God Help the Outcasts”. The only group of people Esmeralda seems to trust and expect to be heard by are the Roma themselves, as she steps forward to stop the hanging of Quasimodo and Phoebus in the Court of Miracles, and Clopin does listen and on her word alone, the two heroes are released. Even the heroes have to prove themselves as non-threatening to herself, as well as the Parisian Roma, before she imbues greater trust in them. This distrust of other characters is thus a consequence of being Romani and a woman, and is part of the movie tackling the idea of racism and sexism, which the novel largely ignores. Given Esmeralda’s distrust of others is shown to be founded in the realities of various forms of harassment, she is seen to be smart to not blindly place faith in others due to their authority or power, and she therefore models her values of doing what is right and fighting for herself and others who are oppressed, even when that involves standing up to unjust systems and people.

This lends itself to the fact that, unlike the book, Esmeralda is not afraid of scorn, scrutiny, or consequences for defying injustice. In the book, she often runs from public ridicule (such as when she offers Quasimodo water after his public lashings and her biological mother - although neither knows of their relationship at this point - lashes out at her for being Romani, so she flees the scene, or when Phoebus’s fiancée and her friends belittle her based largely on her appearance and call her a witch for Djali performing supposed magic at her direction, and she runs away again), or she faints from conflict or overwhelming feelings (as is often the case in matters concerning Phoebus in the novel, notably when he is stabbed by Frollo, and when he ignores her as she is about to be hung). The movie Esmeralda possesses a stronger constitution, and is unconcerned with public opinion regarding her, perhaps sure that she can convince the common folk to agree with her or at least not interrupt her protest (as at the Feast of Fools, when the crowd stopped tormenting Quasimodo at her approach and helped her escape Frollo’s guards after she stood up to him); there is no figure from the crowd, in this scene, who attempts to stop or dissuade Esmeralda’s aid to Quasimodo, and Frollo’s attempt cannot override her commitment to justice and empathy. She has significantly more agency

and control over the story than previous Disney heroines, as was a marker of the Disney Renaissance princesses' characterizations.

There is much to be critiqued, however, in making Esmeralda into a "strong" woman of color archetype, who never backs down from a challenge, always picks up the slack from the other (white, male) characters, unerringly serves as educator and advocate throughout the plot, and consistently serves as the person who puts herself at risk in order to save the two heroes, Quasimodo and Phoebus, putting her in increasing conflict with and attention from Frollo, the villain. Numerous scholars, particularly female scholars of color and Black female scholars, have written on what it means to portray Black women and other women of color as solely the "strong Black woman" archetype, and how this limits the representations and interpretations of Black women and women of color. Perhaps most poignantly, Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2009) states in the Introduction to her book, *Behind the Mask of the Strong Black Woman: Voice and the Embodiment of a Costly Performance*, that, "The defining quality of Black womanhood is strength" (page 1). Her book explores how the Strong Black Woman archetype presents a singular view of what it means to be a Black woman, and how this shapes the lives, actions, beliefs, and (re)presentations of Black women, and how repeated exposure to and expectation of this archetype can turn the selfless-to-the-point-of-destruction, everyone-before-me, community-over-self, I-can-handle-it-all, superwoman mask of the Strong Black Woman into an inescapable constantly-demanding, high-stress reality, where Black women are expected to suffer in silence through personal and social dilemmas in the name of doing good by those around them who rely on their pillar of strength. Chapter 4, in particular, examines how Black women attempting to "do it all" for everyone around them can and will burn out, and how this ultimately only benefits oppressors, with the privilege to not have to constantly be strong for the people around them, and the sociopolitical power to maintain an unjust gendered, racial status quo.

Watching Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, it is clear that Esmeralda has strong convictions regarding justice and empathy for those in need. She places herself at risk, in ways which she did not in the novel, for a "greater good", as she advocates throughout the film for those "less lucky" than herself, and those who are openly targeted for violence and harassment. She embodies the Strong Black Woman archetype, as she handles all her own problems and the problems of the heroes, until it nearly kills her, as the climax sees her being burnt at the stake after increasing her exposure to danger and violence throughout the film in an attempt to aid the heroes and others who she sees as being mistreated through Frollo's abuses of power.

Esmeralda - and the existence of the Strong Black Woman archetype, in general - can be seen as an attempted refutation to the Angry Black Woman stereotype (examined by Celeste Walley-Jean (2009), among others), a manner of reclaiming the narrative about women of color's capabilities and their emotional responses to their loads. Strong Black Women are expected to not complain or react negatively about the (often very emotional) burden of handling everything around them, and are often conceived of as community caregivers, which juxtaposes quite jaggedly with the Angry Black Woman stereotype where explosive anger and aggression are commonly attributed to Black women and other women of color. And while this may have merit in debunking the myth behind Black women being more emotionally volatile in comparison to other races/ethnicities and genders, there is considerable harm to be done in emphasizing a calm, loving, caring Black womanhood above any other potential expressions of this state. In addition to the previously mentioned stressors of maintaining this facade, it also places the burden of perpetual emotional control onto women of color, which - in the case of Esmeralda, but also in the real lives of women of color activists - forces the oppressed to educate, hand-hold, and convert to allies members of the oppressor group, all while maintaining an expected emotional poise and distance from the subject matter at hand - that being their lived experiences of often violent discrimination.

Esmeralda must patiently explain to Quasimodo that she is Romani, and his negative views about Roma extend to her, and gently nudge him to confront that Frollo may have been wrong in the social views which he taught to Quasimodo. Esmeralda also has to ignore the woman at the start of the film, who tells her child to "stay away" from the performing Roma, or else they will "rob us blind", because if she reacted there would likely be legal consequences - though guards arrive to harass the Roma anyways, and Esmeralda has to try to civilly explain that she earned the money which they accuse her of stealing, before she can escape them.

For Esmeralda, being a Strong Black Woman - or Strong Romani Woman, in this case - means that she does not have much room to be vulnerable within the film, and is not permitted to be genuinely fragile or in need of help. The only times she does so - such as when Quasimodo helps her escape the cathedral when she is being hunted, or when Quasimodo rescues her from the pyre - she either has to immediately return the favor in some way (risking her life to come back to see Quasimodo soon), or she did not actually ask for help in the first place (being unconscious at the point when Quasimodo saves her). These instances are also further complicated by the gendered and racial dynamic between the two characters, as the White Savior and Knight in Shining Armor meld in these visuals of Quasimodo supposedly aiding a damsel in distress, despite the rest of Esmeralda's actions showing that she is clearly capable

of handling herself. Most of the time, as a Strong Romani Woman, Esmeralda presents an aura of capability, street smarts, fearlessness, fierce agency, especially when in public, leaving little room for her to have many moments of softness or likely much-needed comfort, even when in private with her close friends.

Yet her commitment to justice and empathy also leads to Esmeralda having a significantly improved relationship with the main character, Quasimodo, as compared to the book. She only very briefly expresses shock when she discovers at the Feast of Fools that Quasimodo's face is not a mask, as she thought, but his actual appearance; in the book, she spends long amounts of time getting acclimated to his appearance, and is still frightened by him or pities him. The movie Esmeralda is very quick to recover from her shock, and is never shown to be afraid of Quasimodo or pitying him for how he looks. She also does not weaponize his devotion to her or their friendship, as in the book she sends him to deliver a message to Phoebus when she must remain in the cathedral and is upset with him when he seems to have failed, and she also has him fight Frollo off of her when she is unable to and threatens Frollo's life even after discovering their ties to one another. In the movie, the worst she can be accused of is the kiss to his cheek to get him to stop listing reasons they cannot meet again (as previously mentioned), but she does not actually attempt to control him or his decisions beyond this act of persuasion to not prevent their friendship from deepening. She also consciously works in this scene to ensure that Quasimodo's life is not made more dangerous or difficult by knowing her, easily agreeing to come to the cathedral when Quasimodo expresses that he does not think he could leave, especially given how angry Frollo was about his attendance at the Feast of Fools. Despite being a wanted fugitive, Esmeralda says she will come to him, and she is committed to developing their friendship and being there for Quasimodo.

1.2.4: An Adapted Plot

Perhaps one of the most obvious changes from the novel to the film is that there is significantly less death in the Disney movie. This includes Esmeralda, who is hung in the book but who survives the movie (and is shown to still be living in the sequel film, and who continues to be used in wider franchising materials). This is critical perhaps for the simplest, most fairy tale reason of all: it communicates that Romani women are capable of having happy endings. They are not doomed to be killed in a murderous plot of jealousy and unfulfilled lust, they do not have to be tortured by unrequited love with a man who does not value them (nor do they have to end up with the main character just because he is the hero, although more concerning this in the next chapter), they are not forced into a marriage to save the life of an innocent

(Esmeralda's husband, Pierre Gringoire, is in fact cut from the movie entirely, although his role is filled by other characters, particularly in the Court of Miracles scene with Phoebus and Quasimodo, where she is able to stop their hanging but obviously it is not needed that the men marry a Romani woman to be trusted enough to be sparred), or any other number of horrible fates that Esmeralda stumbles through in the novel, and other Romani women have faced throughout media representations of them. Instead, Romani women are allowed to end up with the man they want, in a world where they do not have to fear such harsh persecution and threat of violence, and with strong friendships in and out of their community to help them navigate anything else that comes their way.

In addition to much of the death, also removed was much of the violence committed against Esmeralda in the novel, which included several attempted rapes by multiple characters, and torturing her for a confession prior to her execution, as well as: Phoebus's lies and manipulations; Frollo's disguises; stalking and kidnapping from multiple characters; periods of isolation and mind-altering loneliness; assault, verbal, mental, and physical; nonconsensual exhibition of Phoebus's seduction of her and her naked body afterwards; and desecration of her corpse and its final resting place. The more violent content was clearly removed to make the film more suitable for children, and numerous other elements were removed to accommodate time restrictions, changes to the storyline, and a desire to focus on Quasimodo's parts of the story, as previously mentioned, but the end result is nonetheless a film with significantly less violence, harassment, and terror against women of color. In fact, Esmeralda - especially as compared to the two heroes, and the background characters of the film - has a lot of control over the events of the story, and is able to protect herself and her friends almost single-handedly throughout the film (although the issues with her overly-active role as a Strong Romani Woman were previously discussed in the above section). Decreasing the amount of victimization which a woman of color is subjected to on screen, and severely toning down what is left behind (such as Frollo's attempted assault of her in the cathedral, and his lustful feelings towards her throughout the film) creates a significantly less brutalized depiction of Romani women, and shifts Esmeralda as a character away from the helplessness and fear which haunts and paralyzes her in the novel.

Esmeralda also features prominently in the action of the climax (despite starting the climactic action having nearly died from asphyxiation after inhaling smoke on her pyre), when in the novel she was missing or undermining her own rescue, and then dead, for the height of the action. Her capabilities to fight are demonstrated in previous encounters with guards in the film, and her willingness to confront Frollo - again, already well-established - is a continued

theme at the height of the action. Even when Frollo appears as though he will kill her, Esmeralda does not abandon Quasimodo to fall to his death, and is a loyal and fiercely protective friend throughout the film. Esmeralda is recognized as a heroine throughout the film, saving Quasimodo from his torment at the Feast of Fools, protecting him from Frollo's wrath over their potential meeting again, saving his life in the Court of Miracles (along with Phoebus's) and again when he almost falls while fighting Frollo, and brings him safely out of the cathedral by the end; she also saves Phoebus's life when he nearly drowns in the river after being shot by an arrow, gets him to safety, and stitches his wound closed. Overall, Esmeralda's actions throughout the storyline, and the changed plot from the novel, make it quite clear that Romani women are not merely subjected to the whims of others - especially not white men lusting after them - and they are fully capable of standing up to oppression and taking charge of events that would otherwise be out of their control.

And, of course, the purpose of the film and its central message is changed; whereas Victor Hugo was concerned with telling a story of moral decay that paralleled the decay of the Notre Dame cathedral itself in his day as an effort to revitalize an interest in the Gothic architecture of the city, the Disney movie imparts a message about fighting against racism and sexism, and how justice, empathy, and kindness will triumph over abuses of power, selfishness, and evil. The film places focus on free will, and its use to counter tyranny, highlighting the importance of the actions of the characters and what motivates them - especially love, friendship and justice - which are seen as being as central to the life of Paris as the cathedral itself

Due to this, Esmeralda and her treatment throughout the film, increasingly serves as a call to action to the other characters to do something to change what is happening (as will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter), and she is lauded as a hero and cheered on by the crowd come the end of the film. And while we do not get a more satisfying dissolution or confrontation of a character's hatred or prejudice toward the Roma or Esmeralda (as at least happens with Esmeralda's birth mother, in the novel), racism and sexism are consistently challenged in her actions and attitudes throughout the movie, and shown to be consistently reprehensible given their embodiment in the film's villain.

It is important to note, though, that Frollo - as the villain - never explains why he hates Romani people, besides seeing them as unholy demons that are a plague on Paris. The film lacks the backstory of discrimination which Roma have faced throughout European history since their arrival to the continent, and does not depict many other commonly held prejudices and discriminations against them which they faced (these are only briefly included in the

beginning of the film with the woman who says Roma "will steal us blind", and the guards who say Roma don't earn money, they only steal it). Also, by having Frollo mainly say his beliefs about Roma to non-Romani characters, who do not challenge him, and not having Esmeralda be able to counter his claims in the cathedral when Frollo makes his views towards "[her] kind" apparent to her, an opportunity is missed to permit a Romani character to correct the furthering of anti-Roma hatred that the novel perpetuates in the scene between Esmeralda and her mother (where Esmeralda explains that she was a stolen child, and essentially validates her mother's hatred of Roma by commiserating over their lost time together due to her theft). While it is not so odd that a critical examination of systematic racism and discrimination against Roma is absent from the novel (that was not Hugo's purpose in writing the book, as stated), Disney made it much more blatant in examining the forms it can take and how anti-Roma racism is not arising solely from personal grievances with Roma (like Esmeralda's birth mother in the book), but rather was a pervasive social view, then and now. A deeper understanding of this, through interactions with a broader range of characters and their beliefs, would have offered a better tackling of the issue of anti-Roma racism, however, and furthered the aim of the movie to address injustice.

1.3: Keeping the Classics: What Was Retained from the Novel

While much of the novel was adapted to a new form of the movie, several critical components were retained. Namely, key relationship dynamics between characters were retained, as the basis for how they feel towards one another, interact with each other, and what their motives in the work were. Additionally, several stereotypical characteristics of Roma were retained in the Disney film version of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

1.3.1: Esmeralda and Quasimodo

Esmeralda and Quasimodo still share a comforting scene of Esmeralda helping him after the crowd turns on him, at the end of the Feast of Fools sequence in the film and after Quasimodo's flogging in the novel. This is especially notable because, in both instances, she does so after Frollo has chosen not to help Quasimodo in the same situation, despite Quasimodo calling out for him. In each instance, it is a true solidification for Quasimodo that someone other than Frollo - and indeed, someone *instead* of Frollo - can and will help him when he is in need. It shows him that Esmeralda, at least, is willing to assist, and this serves as the beginning of Quasimodo's interest in her. In the movie, as compared to the novel, Esmeralda takes her aid a step further, in that not only does she offer him comfort, she also frees him from the ropes

tying him down and takes a stand against Frollo to publicly say that permitting such treatment of Quasimodo is wrong, and unjust. She refuses to be silenced on the matter, and it is this act that sets off Frollo's deep hatred of her, and starts the city-wide search for her after she escapes. Even with such raised stakes, Esmeralda does not abandon Quasimodo, thus serving as a deeper grounding for their later friendship in the film (as compared to an acquaintanceship, at best, in the novel).

1.3.2: Esmeralda and Frollo

As in the novel, Frollo sees Esmeralda as committing acts of witchcraft (in the novel, this was primarily associated with Djali's tricks that Esmeralda taught him, whereas in the movie, she disappears from the stage when being chased), and uses this to justify persecution of and eventual death to her. He also firmly believes that - due to his religious nature, and self-denial as an extension of this - she has been sent by the devil to seduce and tempt him, and when he feels himself giving in to her, he blames her solely for his affliction. Both the novel and the film devote a significant amount of time to describing and showing how Frollo becomes lost in this delusion of Esmeralda tricking him into abandoning his religious morals and pursuing her physically, and each shows in multiple instances that he is willing to seemingly abandon this conviction of her demonic nature and the righteous path to purge the world of her, if only she will be with him - hinting at just how far down the delusion he is. And just like the novel, Esmeralda still refuses safety in the form of accepting Frollo's advancements, Frollo still publicly accuses Esmeralda of witchcraft and tries to watch her die as punishment for refusing him, and Quasimodo still manages to convey Esmeralda to sanctuary when she is unable to do so for herself, and takes her into the cathedral when Frollo is trying to have her killed. The movie amplified the personal nature of Frollo trying to have Esmeralda killed, as he would have directly killed her in the film by lighting the fire on which she burned, and not just delivered her to guards before her murder, as in the novel.

1.3.3: Frollo and Quasimodo (and Esmeralda's Role)

Frollo and Quasimodo's relationship, as in the novel, was far from perfect prior to Esmeralda's arrival in their lives, but she does exasperate Frollo's abuse towards Quasimodo out of jealousy, frustration, and anger, as throughout the novel. In the film, this is poignantly displayed in Frollo's destruction of Quasimodo's carving of Esmeralda over dinner, and his declaration that he knows Quasimodo helped Esmeralda escape from the cathedral; in the novel, this is most strongly manifested in Frollo's kidnapping of Esmeralda from the cathedral not too long after Quasimodo stops him from attempting to rape her at night. Once more, the

film's version takes the actions to another height, as Frollo's threat to Esmeralda's safety - claiming he has found the Court of Miracles, where she is hiding, and plans to attack "with a thousand men" to capture and kill her - prompts Quasimodo to ally with Phoebus in order to find the Court of Miracles and warn Esmeralda, as Frollo - unbeknownst to either - follows him, and thus actually discovers where Esmeralda was hiding, his previous admission being revealed as a bluff to force Quasimodo's hand. This manipulation ultimately results in a more definitive severance of ties between the two characters over the fate of Esmeralda, and a more oppositional display over two's role in how her discovery and attempted murder (and eventual rescue) play out.

1.3.4: Stereotypes

Last, but certainly not least, numerous stereotypes about Romani people were not altered from the novel to the film. And while some of them may have been too central to change if the creative team wanted to retain as much faithfulness to Hugo's novel as possible - such as Esmeralda's social standing, her profession, the association with witchcraft and devilry, and difficulties with the authorities - they still perpetrate only very limited depictions of Romani people. Ties to begging (as seen particularly in Esmeralda's disguise with Djali where they pretend to be an older man huddled under a cloak with a cap out to collect coins), poverty (seen in the tattered state of her clothes and her bare feet), criminality (seen in her first confrontation with the guards, where she is accused of theft, as well as her actual defiance against Frollo, who is a high judicial power in Paris and the highest secular authority presented in the film, and her need to be in hiding for the rest of the film), witchcraft and magic (appearing on stage at the Feast of Fools in a cloud of smoke, and disappearing without a trace after the confrontation with the guards, among Frollo's accusations against her), social exclusion (the mother telling her child that they must "stay away" for fear of robbery), palm-reading and fortune-telling (as seen in a scene atop Notre Dame cathedral's roof, with Quasimodo), and trickery (her skills with disguise, hiding, and evading the guards and other forms of capture) all feed into wider social stereotypes about Romani people, which are rife through media and society, for the medieval setting of the film, at the time of the film's making, and in the present day.

In addition, there are numerous stereotypes about Romani people with a gendered component that are displayed within the film. Perhaps most clearly is Esmeralda's life as a performer, using her beauty and skill with music and dance to earn a living, and also to participate in celebrations such as the Feast of Fools. While this may appear to be a kind of

social acceptance, especially given her apparent headliner status at the festival, this is actually a method to keep Roma at arms' length in only certain forms of unofficial economic positions, and reinforces Romani women as objects to look at and spectacles to enjoy, predominantly through the lens of the male gaze (Mulvey 1975), as Esmeralda's performances are sexually charged and often for a predominantly male crowd, given men had the most economic power in medieval society. This sexualization of Romani women serves as an embodiment of the fetishization of the Exotic Other (Said 1978), and is especially evident in the film as compared to the novel, as Esmeralda's dance performance is significantly more risqué than her self-appointed actions in the book, especially when considering her costuming as the Whore of Babylon (to be discussed in section 3.1.3). The resultant sexualization of Esmeralda in the Feast of Fools sequence, as well as by Frollo for the duration of the film but most noticeably in his villain song, "Hellfire", and his unique positioning as one of the only Disney villains to even hint at lust, let alone manifest it as his driving force, is a very telling result of a woman of color being objectified in the film's storyline.

1.3.5: Why Isn't "Roma" Used in the Film?

Finally, the use of the term "g*psy" to refer to the Romani characters - including Esmeralda - despite its status as a slur in the English language, and notably in the United States, where much of the creative team for the film was based, is one of the more oft-discussed concerns with depicting the Romani characters in the film. It could possibly be dismissed as being historically accurate to a period before "Roma" being selected by the First Romani World Congress as the term which should be used to refer to Romani people (this did not occur until 1971), or as being an extension of the racism expressed towards Roma in the movie that other characters call them this, and an attempt at reclamation by the Romani characters that they call themselves this. However, these possible explanations aside, in the directors' commentary edition of the film (1997), the directors can be heard using this term throughout the film commentary to refer to their Romani characters, with no comment or critical reflection on their usage of this term, so the most probable explanation would most likely be that the creative team at the time just did not find issue with the employment of this term.

In more recent years, Disney has begun adding a disclaimer in front of several films which involve stereotypically racist depictions of certain races and ethnicities, such as Ben Sharpsteen's *Dumbo* (1941), Hamilton Luske, Clyde Geronimi, and Wilfred Jackson's *Peter Pan* (1953), and Wolfgang Reitherman's *The Aristocats* (1970), among some others which are viewable on Disney+, the company's streaming service. The disclaimer reads: "This program

includes negative depictions and/or mistreatment of people or cultures. These stereotypes were wrong then and are wrong now. Rather than remove this content, we want to acknowledge its harmful impact, learn from it and spark conversation to create a more inclusive future together." While there is much to say about the effectiveness of such a disclaimer, what Disney as a company is actually doing to combat racism and "spark conversation" on the issue, and why they chose to begin including such a disclaimer, what I would like to highlight is that no such disclaimer precludes watching *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, or its sequel, on the streaming site. And this is not because, as could possibly be claimed, Disney is unaware of the use of "g*psy" as a slur, given their European stage production, adapted from the film and the novel, does include such a disclaimer about the harm of the slur and why it is kept in the performance, "after consultations with the Roma and Sinti community", stating: "under the title »Gypsies«, Roma and Sinti, among others, were already persecuted and murdered before and during the Middle Ages. We do not want to make this historical fact invisible by removing the word pointing to it – rather, it should be shown and pointed out. We explicitly point out that »Gypsy« is a foreign term under which more than 500,000 Rom*nja and Sinti*zze were murdered under National Socialism" (Horvath 2023). It is obvious, then, that some work is still needed in deconstructing how race and racial stereotypes and slurs have impacted the depictions within the film, even if it has come a long way from the original novel.

Chapter 2 – Romani Women as Supporting Characters in the Film

Walt Disney Pictures' *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* was released June 21, 1996 to U.S. audiences, two days after its premiere in the Louisiana Superdome for the city of New Orleans following a city-wide parade and celebration of the film's premiere. The film was directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, and produced by Don Hahn. Within the film, there were several female Romani characters, including two of the three women with speaking lines in the film, and an entire underground culture which is populated, cared for, and maintained by Romani women. This chapter will examine Quasimodo's unnamed mother, and the Romani women who are present throughout the rest of the film, as the less-prominent Romani women of Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, while Chapter 3 shall examine the deuteragonist, Esmeralda.

2.1: Quasimodo's Mother

Within Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), there are few women beyond Esmeralda who have a significant impact upon the film's plot, character developments, or overall message. This fits a broader pattern of women - especially women of color - being relegated to less significant roles in film (see: Mctaggart, Cox, & Heldman (2021)). Perhaps the second most significant figure behind Esmeralda in the film is Quasimodo's mother; she is one of only three women with distinct speaking parts in the film (the third being the woman who tells her child to "stay away" from the Roma when Esmeralda is first seen performing in the street). She is also the first woman we are introduced to in the film that is not panned past in the opening sequence as part of setting the scene of Paris. And while her time on screen is brief, her actions establish the basis for the story about to occur, and her attributes as a loving, protective, and sacrificial mother mark a clear break from the brief mention of her character in the novel, and firmly place in her the role of benevolent but absent Disney parent.

2.1.1: Love and Protection

During her time on screen, Quasimodo's mother is chiefly concerned with the well-being of her child. She - and the other Roma in the scene - are attempting to sneak into Paris during Frollo's campaign against the Roma, and while the dark lighting, somber music, and

furtive camera shots all help to establish the fear and panic that these characters feel, the most attention is clearly paid to the person closest to baby Quasimodo - his mother. Despite the tension of the moment, Quasimodo's mother never strays from a loving demeanor towards her child; when the baby is crying, and her male partner says to "Shut it up, will you?" and their male companion exclaims, "We'll be spotted!", Quasimodo's mother's fervent response is a pleading, "Hush, little one." This contrast in care given to her baby - when the men on screen seem wholly unconcerned with the baby's distress and obvious discomfort - is an obvious demonstration of the love which Quasimodo's mother has for him. Her addressment of him as "little one" - when her partner calls Quasimodo "it", and their companion does not even reference Quasimodo at all in his concern over the adult members of the party only - emphasizes her closeness to the child, above even a supposedly close friend (given the man travels with the couple and their infant) and Quasimodo's other parent. And despite the danger of the moment, his mother only looks away from Quasimodo when her partner addresses her, and otherwise keeps her gaze fixed on her child and her arms increasingly wrapping the infant closer and closer to her, bringing him nearer to her face as she attempts to soothe and comfort him during his crying.

When the group is ambushed, his mother's desire to keep Quasimodo close to her and to protect him from being identified as a baby with severe physical deformities is only heightened. While her partner is concerned with shielding her from the guards and their weapons, Quasimodo's mother is preoccupied with keeping him swaddled tightly and his face hidden mainly against her body. This instinct is intensified when Frollo emerges onto the scene, as well as when a guard - and later Frollo - attempts to take Quasimodo from her. She fights against them trying to grab what Frollo believes are "stolen goods", and she has to be kicked by Frollo from atop his horse before she releases her child, demonstrating just how powerful her grip on Quasimodo was and how desperately she tried to keep her custody of him during these moments of antagonism. Given his appearance, it was likely that Quasimodo feared for his life (justifiably so, given Frollo attempts to drown Quasimodo after uncovering his appearance) if he were to be seen by Frollo or his men.

Thus, despite knowing the potential for increased punishment it would bring upon herself, Quasimodo's mother chooses to run away from the guards and Frollo with her child, rather than risk his appearance being revealed when the guard initially moved to seize Quasimodo from her, and the possible repercussions that such a reveal could have had if they had not allowed her to keep her child after seeing him. The chase sequence that follows is full of close-ups and push-ins on Quasimodo's mother's face, showing her terrified and frantic

expression as she runs from Frollo and dodges obstacles in her path. The camera further employs an angle from above looking down on her as she pounds on the cathedral doors for sanctuary and is unanswered, as well as an angle from below looking up at Frollo from behind Quasimodo's mother as Frollo kicks her and finally manages to take her child away. Both of these shots establish how small and frightened she appears, when juxtaposed with aid that does not come, and with a force better equipped to take than she is to defend her child, respectively. Her desire to continue defending Quasimodo - until her death - is one which is seen as admirable, but hopeless, a situation made increasingly apparent to the mother as the heightening of the musical tension parallels the physical confrontation that she ultimately loses to Frollo.

In this loss, one final characteristic is attributed to Quasimodo's mother, which is innocence. The Archdeacon, upon arriving at the scene too late, commands Frollo, "See there the innocent blood you have spilt on the steps of Notre Dame" (4:08-4:14). Her attempt to rescue her child from Frollo and his men, so that he may avoid suffering and violence, or death most likely, at their hands. While she may have run from these authority figures in doing so, she is clearly defined here as being without guilt for having done so. This solidifies her love and protection as the moral things to do - especially given the setting at the steps of Notre Dame cathedral - and establishes her life being lost as a sacrifice made in the name of trying to care for and save her son.

2.1.2: Sacrifice and Missing Disney Parenthood

It is a common theme for the main characters in Disney films to be young heroes and heroines who are missing one or more parent(s). This is what largely provides the context for the main character to undergo their journeys without having a family back home which would prevent them from leaving or undertaking dangerous tasks, or who would fulfill the parental role of attempting to protect their child (as Quasimodo's mother does) throughout the entire film, potentially stagnating the character development of the (often quite young, especially in earlier Disney films) main characters.

Often, the main character's biological parents have both died or otherwise been removed from the main character's life before the story starts, such as in David Hand, Perce Pearce, William Cottrell, Larry Morey, Wilfred Jackson, and Ben Sharpsteen's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), where Snow White is being raised by her stepmother after the death of her mother and, later, her father; Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske, and Clyde Geronimi's *Cinderella* (1950), whose situation is identical to Snow White's; Wolfgang

Reitherman's *The Sword in the Stone* (1963), where Arthur is an orphan being raised as a ward of the neglectful Sir Ector; Wolfgang Reitherman's *The Jungle Book* (1967), where infant Mowgli is find alone in a basket and taken to be raised by wolves; Wolfgang Reitherman, John Lounsbery, and Art Stevens's *The Rescuers* (1977), where orphan Penny is kidnapped from her orphanage as the starting point of the film; Ted Berman, Richard Rich, and Art Stevens's *The Fox and the Hound* (1981), where the fox, Tod, is orphaned before the film begins, and who is later returned to the wild by his adoptive human mother to finish maturing once he gets too old to be around humans anymore as a wild animal; George Scribner's *Oliver & Company* (1988), where Oliver is the only kitten not selected from a box of them left on the street, so he must start life alone; Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise's *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), wherein Belle's father is raising her alone after her mother's death prior to the start of the film, and then he is captured by the Beast and Belle exchanges places with him, thereby separating the two until the climax of the film; and John Musker and Ron Clements's *Aladdin* (1992), where Aladdin is an orphan who had to raise himself on the streets. Esmeralda and Quasimodo both fall within this category of character, being orphaned in Quasimodo's case, and without any apparent family, in Esmeralda's.

In other cases, the parent(s) is/are removed from the action of the film early on in the story, such as in Ben Sharpsteen and Hamilton Luske's *Pinocchio* (1940), where Geppetto is a single father to the titular wood carving that is brought to life, and from whom Pinocchio is early on separated from when he is tricked and kidnapped by a sequence of villains; Ben Sharpsteen's *Dumbo* (1941), where Dumbo is shown to only have a mother, who is locked away early on in the film as a "mad elephant" for her actions in trying to protect Dumbo; David Hand's *Bambi* (1942), whose mother is killed early on in an offscreen hunt, and whose father is often physically absent and certainly emotionally distant throughout the rest of the film; Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, and Hamilton Luske's *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), where the titular Alice's parents are not seen throughout the whole film, although they are implied to exist; in Hamilton Luske, Clyde Geronimi, and Wilfred Jackson's *Peter Pan* (1953), where the Darling children leave home - and their parents - behind as the rising action of the film begins, and only return upon the resolution; for Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, and Hamilton Luske's *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), Lady's human parents leave early on in the action, and do not return until the climax; Clyde Geronimi, Wolfgang Reitherman, Eric Larson, and Les Clark's *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), where Aurora is raised in isolation from all - including her parents, who are both living - but the three good fairies, as an attempt to prevent Maleficent's curse from coming true; in *The Jungle Book* (1967), again, as Mowgli must leave behind his

adoptive wolf family for the safety of all involved when Shere Khan begins hunting him; Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel's *The Rescuers Down Under* (1990), where Cody is kidnapped at the beginning of the film and his parents are led to believe he has been eaten by crocodiles, and do not see him again until he is returned home at the film's end; and Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff's *The Lion King* (1992), where Simba's father is killed early on in the film and Simba is convinced by his uncle to run away, despite his mother and the rest of his family still being alive, and they are not reunited until the climax of the film.

And even more Disney films have a parent who is present, but only one, which is often a source of contention, difficulty, or sorrow as the single parent may struggle to handle the challenges of raising their child on their own without their partner being present, such as in: *The Fox and the Hound* (1981), where both the titular fox and hound are raised by one human each; Oliver from *Oliver & Company* (1988), where Oliver is eventually taken in by Fagin, and then Jenny, both serving separately as adoptive caretakers to Oliver; John Musker and Ron Clements's *The Little Mermaid* (1989), whose mother dies before the start of the film, and whose father is raising Ariel and her sisters by himself; Jasmine, from *Aladdin* (1992), whose mother died before the start of the film, and whose father is raising her alone; and Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg's *Pocahontas* (1995), whose titular character is in the same situation as Jasmine.

In total, it is quite common for Disney parents to be dead, absent, locked away, or never there to start with. They are further sometimes replaced by another figure who fills their role, such as with Frollo in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, but is often doing so in a poor manner, devoid of love or care that parents such as Quasimodo's mother so obviously demonstrate. These figures are often the villain, as is the case for Snow White (The Evil Queen is her stepmother) and Cinderella (Lady Tremaine is her stepmother). Thus, the Evil Stepmother archetype was established in some of the earliest animated feature films done by Walt Disney, and is returned to in *The Hunchback*, though with the genders of the main character and their stepparent being swapped to male in this story.

2.1.3: Significance

The death of Quasimodo's mother, and specifically, her replacement in Quasimodo's life with Frollo serving as his reluctant adoptive guardian, serves as the foundation for the rest of the film's action. This callback to an earlier hero-villain dynamic - seen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and *Cinderella* (1950) - gives *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* a more classic feeling, and places its roots among these stories of distressed princesses, jealous

stepmothers, and dashing princes who save the day - simply gender-swapped. This close proximity between villain and hero allows for much of the action throughout the film, and heightens the impact of Frollo's punitive worldview upon Quasimodo and his friends. It also creates a deeper betrayal against the main character, that he cannot trust a figure who is meant to care for and protect him, as his mother clearly tried to do, and would have likely continued doing, if she had not been killed by the very figure who later raised him. This dynamic adds an additional layer of repulsiveness to Frollo's actions against Quasimodo throughout the film, and further underscores the tragic loss of Quasimodo's mother and her loving and protective nature, as she is replaced with Frollo and his abuse and manipulations against Quasimodo.

This tragedy is compounded by the fact that Frollo also lied to Quasimodo about his mother and her final actions towards him, saying instead that she was "heartless" and she "abandoned [him] as a child" (11:53-11:57). In doing so, Frollo strips Quasimodo of his mother's love, which was so fundamental to the portrayal of her which the audience was able to see prior to her death at Frollo's hand. By rewriting this narrative, Frollo establishes himself as the only person who cares for Quasimodo thus far in his love, denied that fierce, brave love which his mother gave her life for. Frollo weaponizes this lie against Quasimodo as well, when Frollo confronts him about helping Esmeralda evade capture and Quasimodo replies that Esmeralda was kind to him, and Frollo exclaims in fury: "You idiot! That wasn't kindness, it was cunning! She's a gypsy! Gypsies aren't capable of *real* love! Think, boy! Think of your mother!" (1:03:28-1:03:42). The audience is able to see then what was inferred in Frollo's earlier discussion of Quasimodo's mother: that Frollo has utilized his version of events to isolate Quasimodo all his life, to bind Quasimodo to Frollo and his desires, and to convince Quasimodo of the supposed villainy and "heartlessness" of Roma, and Romani women - as he refers to both Esmeralda and Quasimodo's mother in this scene - in particular. Frollo twists the story of how Quasimodo came to be in his care in order to suit his political and personal agenda, as well as to torment Quasimodo and keep him mentally and emotionally distanced from his mother's memory, and from Esmeralda's friendship.

In a further insult to her memory and her selfless love of Quasimodo, Frollo seems to remind himself of the true version of events, only as a means of manipulating Quasimodo even more. After he rages at Quasimodo - culminating in grabbing him by the shirt and shaking him as he yelled in his face - he seems to take a moment to compose himself, and reconfigure his plan of how to find Esmeralda. The result of this is informing Quasimodo that at dawn, Frollo will "attack" the Court of Miracles with "a thousand men" in order to capture and kill Esmeralda (1:04:14). He does so, knowing that Quasimodo will find a way to locate Esmeralda

and warn her of what Frollo plans, and in following him, Frollo is able to actually uncover the location of the Court of Miracles and finally achieve his goals. This plan is motivated by his reminder of the lengths to which Quasimodo's own mother went to protect him, giving her life in defense of the one she loved and sought to keep safe from Frollo. In remembering this sacrifice, and turning it against Quasimodo, Frollo demonstrates his own lack of genuine care for the hero, as well as highlights once more how he knows that Quasimodo's mother loved him deeply and tried to save him from Frollo's wrath as an infant. And, in a final injustice towards Quasimodo's mother and her sacrifice, Frollo only tells Quasimodo of the truth before he attempts to murder him: "I should have known that you'd risk your life to save that gypsy witch. Just as your own mother died trying to save you" (1:20:35-1:20:42). This confession is meant to cause Quasimodo a final moment of torment at Frollo's hands - rather than serve as recognition of the incredible love which Quasimodo's mother had for her son, and the deep bond of friendship and care for one another which Esmeralda and Quasimodo share - and shows that Frollo sees such love as an inconvenience to himself, and a weakness on the part of his victims, rather than as any type of positive thing.

Thus, even though she is in the film herself only briefly, Quasimodo's mother lives on in references throughout a significant portion of the film, serving as a constant tether in the tie between Quasimodo and Frollo, and established in the exposition, rising action, and climax of the film as a still significant feature of how Frollo chooses to interact with his charge. Her actions are a turning point that launches the rest of the events in the film, and her love - juxtaposed against Frollo's cruelty, as he raises Quasimodo in her stead at the command of the Archdeacon - positions the hero as someone who can be deeply cared for, and has only been denied such care due to Frollo's intervention. She also serves as the first on screen victim of Frollo's violence, which is established to be prejudicial, swift, harsh, and magnified across a series of other actions and reactions that emerge due to Frollo's dark beliefs about the world (and the Roma, namely) and how he enacts his brand of justice accordingly.

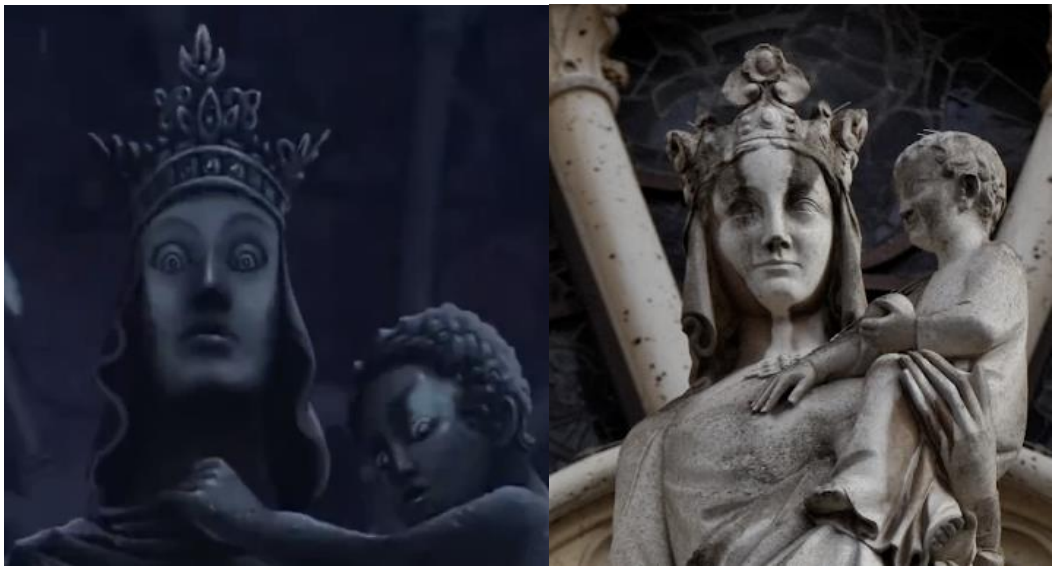
Finally, Quasimodo's mother is killed on the steps of Notre Dame cathedral, while trying to protect her child, which was considered a wholly blameless and "innocent" action by the Archdeacon, God's authority on Earth for the city of Paris (as discussed at the end of the Loving and Protective section, above). The Archdeacon further tells Frollo that, "You can lie to yourself and your minions. You can claim that you haven't a qualm. But you never can run from nor hide what you've done from the eyes - the very eyes of Notre Dame" (4:26-4:44). This reference to the "eyes" of Notre Dame is accompanied by showing the judgmental,

displeased glares of the statues across the building's facade, culminating in a press-in on a statue of the Virgin Mary holding an infant Jesus in her arms.

The Virgin Mary, being the "Notre Dame" for which the cathedral (and ones like it) is named for, is considered by those in the Catholic faith to be not merely Jesus's mother, but also mother of the Catholic Church and its members, and is often a figure to whom Catholics pray for mercy, grace, or divine intervention (as shown throughout the film). This statue of Mary is found above the three portals (the three representing the Life of the Virgin, the Last Judgment, and the Life of St. Anne - the Virgin's mother - in order, from left to right) of the Western façade of the cathedral (in front of which a large part of the film's action takes place), and above the Gallery of the Kings (which is above the three portals, and shows the twenty-eight generations of the Kings of Judea, who came before Jesus's birth), located on what is called the Gallery of the Virgin, where Mary stands holding the infant Christ and flanked by two angels holding a candlestick each, "symbolizing 'fault' and 'redemption'", according to the Friends of Notre Dame de Paris (2023). Given this is her cathedral (based on the dedication conveyed through its naming) and that she stands in a central location above the action, Mary is seen to be presiding over the events happening, and serves as the representative of God's say on the matter which has occurred here.

At the closest point of the press-in on Mary's face, a flash of lightning occurs behind Mary, and it illuminates the statue's eyes as they open to stare down at Frollo, showing the statue seemingly coming to life (as seen in the picture below). The look in Mary's eyes, coupled with the expression on her face - altered to appear more condemning than the statue's actual expression, which is largely genial and pleasant (pictured below) -, demonstrate her disapproval and anger, and her condemnation of Frollo's actions against Quasimodo's mother and the baby that she was forced to leave behind. To animate Mary and clearly show her strong negative reaction against Frollo's murder of Quasimodo's mother paints her as being on the side of his mother, and therefore aligned against Frollo and his action taken against the Romani woman, and even his wider actions against her people. This glare from Mary foreshadows that Frollo will be watched more closely by Mary (and God, as an extension) throughout the film, and demonstrates that Notre Dame, as a building (which is an extension of the Virgin Mary), is alive and will serve as a character within the film - something which the directors Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise also share within their commentary accompanying the DVD release of the film (1997). The addition of the cathedral (and the Virgin Mary, therefore, as the pinnacle of the cathedral's statue court and the one to whom the cathedral is dedicated to) as a character within the film demarks the greater religious significance to the acts committed by both Frollo

and Quasimodo's mother, and ensures that the audience is aware that there is divine disapproval already of Frollo, and divine approval - and pity, with resulting anger directed at Frollo - of Quasimodo's mother (which is later extended to Esmeralda, as will be discussed in the subsequent section 3.2).



Left: close-up of a screenshot from Trousdale and Wise's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996).
Right: close-up of a photograph of the Gallery of the Virgin at Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, France (Friends of Notre Dame 2023).

While Quasimodo's mother's time on screen is short, her impact upon the rest of the film - marking a profound Before and After for Quasimodo's life, and inadvertently bringing him into the care of the villain through her death and the Archdeacon's resulting intervention - is profound. Her two lines in the film ("Hush little one", and "Sanctuary, please give us sanctuary!") are not particularly ground-breaking, but do establish her as a loving and protective force for her child, and her sacrifice for him - while fitting into the wider Disney motif of dead or missing parent(s) that sparks a hero's ability to journey - also serves as a lightning rod for the Virgin Mary's (and God's) attention on the actions of Frollo, particularly as they pertain to Romani women. So, while her overall role may be seen to reinforce women as caretakers, protectors of their children, and victims of violence committed against them, she ultimately achieves a great impact upon the story, and is continually referenced long after her death in the film. And given the role of Quasimodo's mother is the whole reason she is in the film - and it being a position that has greatly improved in representation of mothers of color

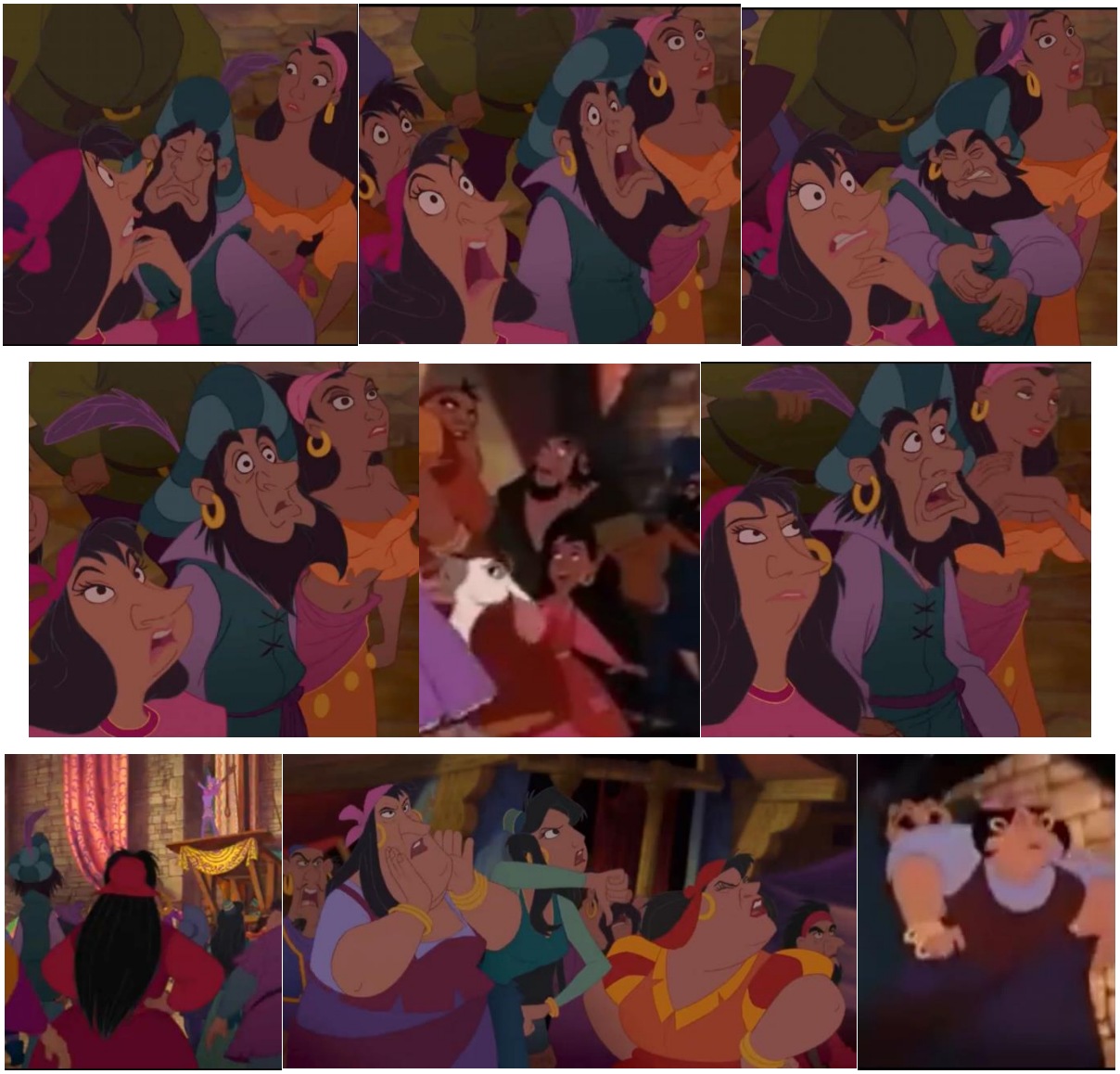
from the one which the novel demonstrated, and considering that there is a time and pacing constraint to the film that does not enable much more attention to be paid for the foregrounding of the film's opening - it is safe to say that the loving, fighting, and sheltering which Quasimodo's mother does in her roughly three minutes on screen is rather substantial.

2.2: Other Female Romani Characters

The longest screen time for and largest number of Romani characters that are seen in the film is in the Court of Miracles sequence. Thus, here is where the audience gets a chance to do more than merely glimpse female Romani characters that are not Quasimodo's mother or Esmerelda, both of whom the audience is emotionally invested in due to their proximity to the hero. By contrast, the Court of Miracles characters are strangers to Quasimodo, and - despite his intentions of saving them from Frollo - they are largely pitted against one another throughout the few minutes of this film segment due to the belief that Quasimodo and Phoebus are spies, making the Court of Miracles a scene of antagonism.

2.2.1: Court of Miracles: Romani Women's Appearances

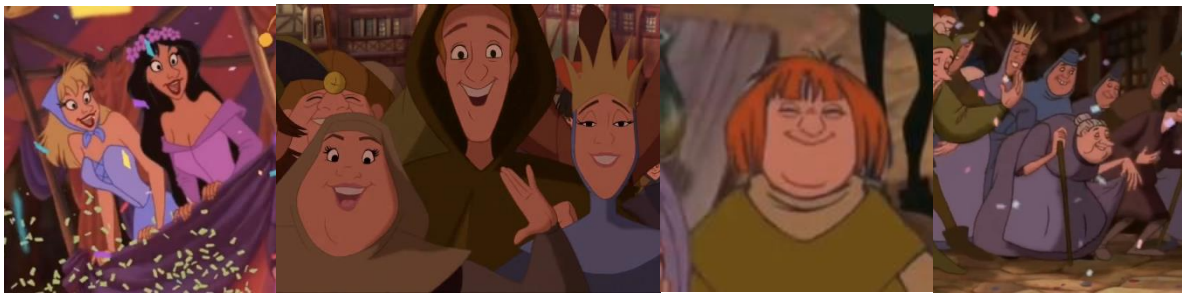
Given the relative unimportance of these characters, and their lack of positive relationship to the male heroes, it is not so surprising that the appearance of these Romani women is not as glamorized as that of the two other Romani women the audience has seen thus far. Instead, they are permitted a wider range of appearances, arguably leading to a more realistic representation of the variety that is inherent to any racial or ethnic group. However, they do tend more towards stereotypical representations of racialized/ethnicized minorities, in particular with their facial features. There is an emphasis on dark eyes, wide mouths, and misshapen noses, as well as predominantly hostile or guarded expressions. Then, while there is a variety of body shapes among the women, they have a higher proportion of heavier set bodies than do the non-Romani female characters from earlier in the film. Their clothes appear more colorful but also less modest than those same women from earlier, and lastly, their faces show largely negative expressions (shock, fear, disgust, anger), although this is shaped in large part by what is occurring in this section of the film.

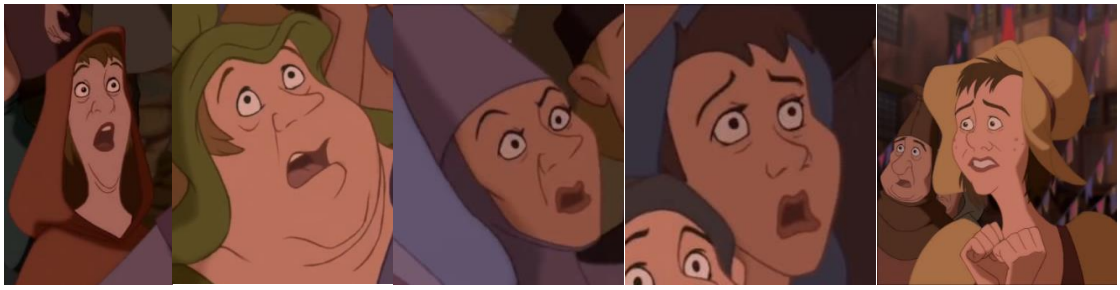


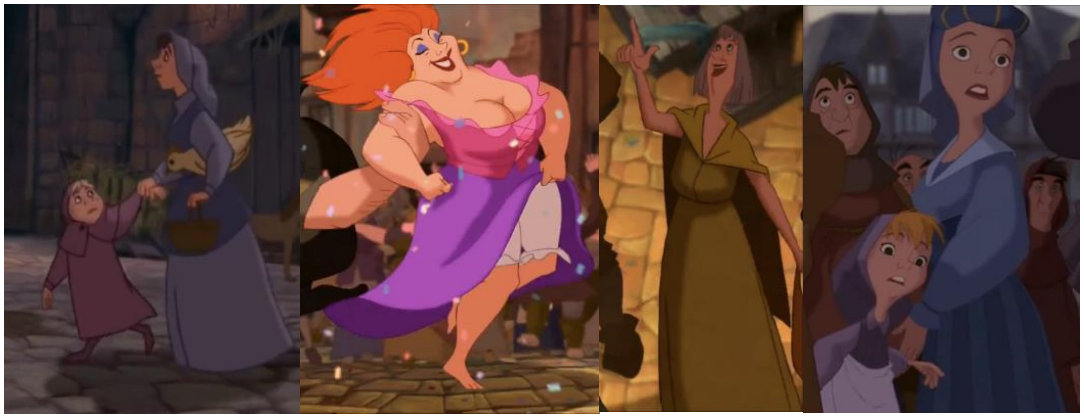
Images of Romani women, taken from the Court of Miracles sequence in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), directed by Kirk Wise and Gary Trousdale.

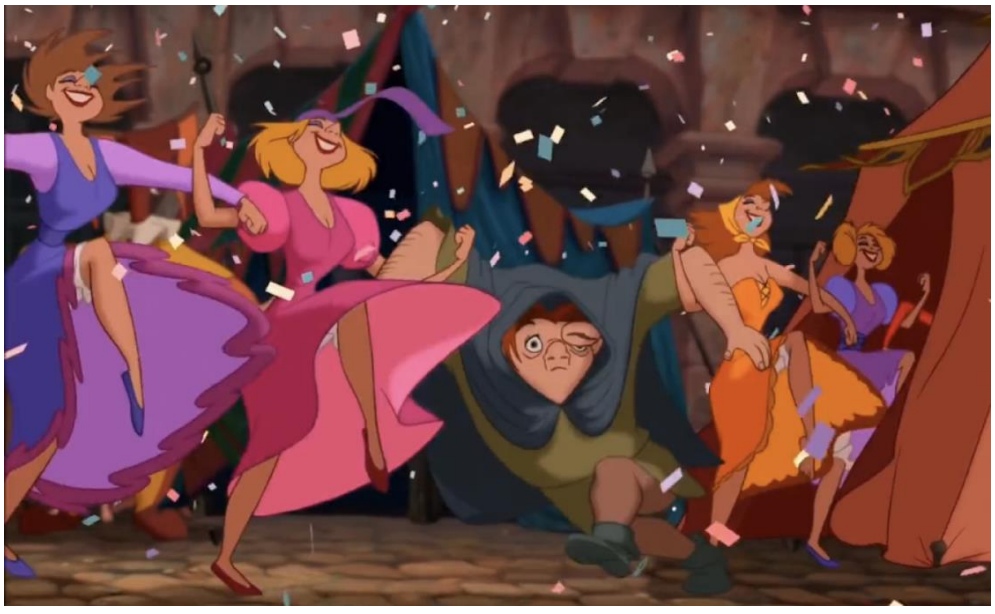
These characteristics amount to a very stereotypical depiction, overall, of these Romani women. The animators did not attempt to portray the full variety of Romani physical appearances, instead focusing on the dark, Exotic Other aesthetic that is attributed to myths surrounding Romani people, and women especially. The fixation with eyes, noses, and mouths to set the Romani women apart from their non-Romani counterparts - while marking them as a separate ethnic group - mainly reinforces the stark ethnic divide between the two groups of people in the film. The Roma are invariably darker-skinned and darker-featured, and additionally, more likely to have appearances that sport exaggerated features and are considered not conventionally attractive, as compared to their non-Romani counterparts (who

are, at worst, plain - see pictures below, in comparison to those from the previous paragraph). This solidifies associations between Romani women and ugliness, which in turn associates them with less trustworthy agendas against the hero.









Screenshots from Trousdale and Wise's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), depicting non-Romani women throughout the film, with most coming from the Feast of Fools sequence.

This last association - of beauty with trust, and ugliness with deceit - has been studied extensively in social sciences (see: Synnott 1990; Dorsey 2006; Shinners 2009; Zhao, Zhou, Shi, & Zhang 2015). The bias against less attractive people and the impact it has therefore on their perceived trustworthiness can be seen at play in the message conveyed to the audience about the average Romani woman from the film: they are not as trustworthy as Esmerelda or Quasimodo's mother (who are both more attractive figures in the film), or even as the average non-Romani female character either. Given there are more female Romani characters than the two Roma women whom the audience has closer ties to, it can be argued that the audience is meant to draw from this numerical imbalance that more Romani women than not will be less attractive than the average non-Romani woman. Consequently, the association will be made that, given Romani women are less attractive and subconsciously this equates to their level of trustworthiness, Romani women may be perceived as less trustworthy overall. Additionally, it can be communicated that only specific kinds of Romani women - such as Quasimodo's mother and Esmeralda, who the audience spends more time with and who are conventionally attractive - can be seen as trustworthy, leading these women to being potential cases of ethnic exceptionalism, based on how the other Romani women are portrayed here.

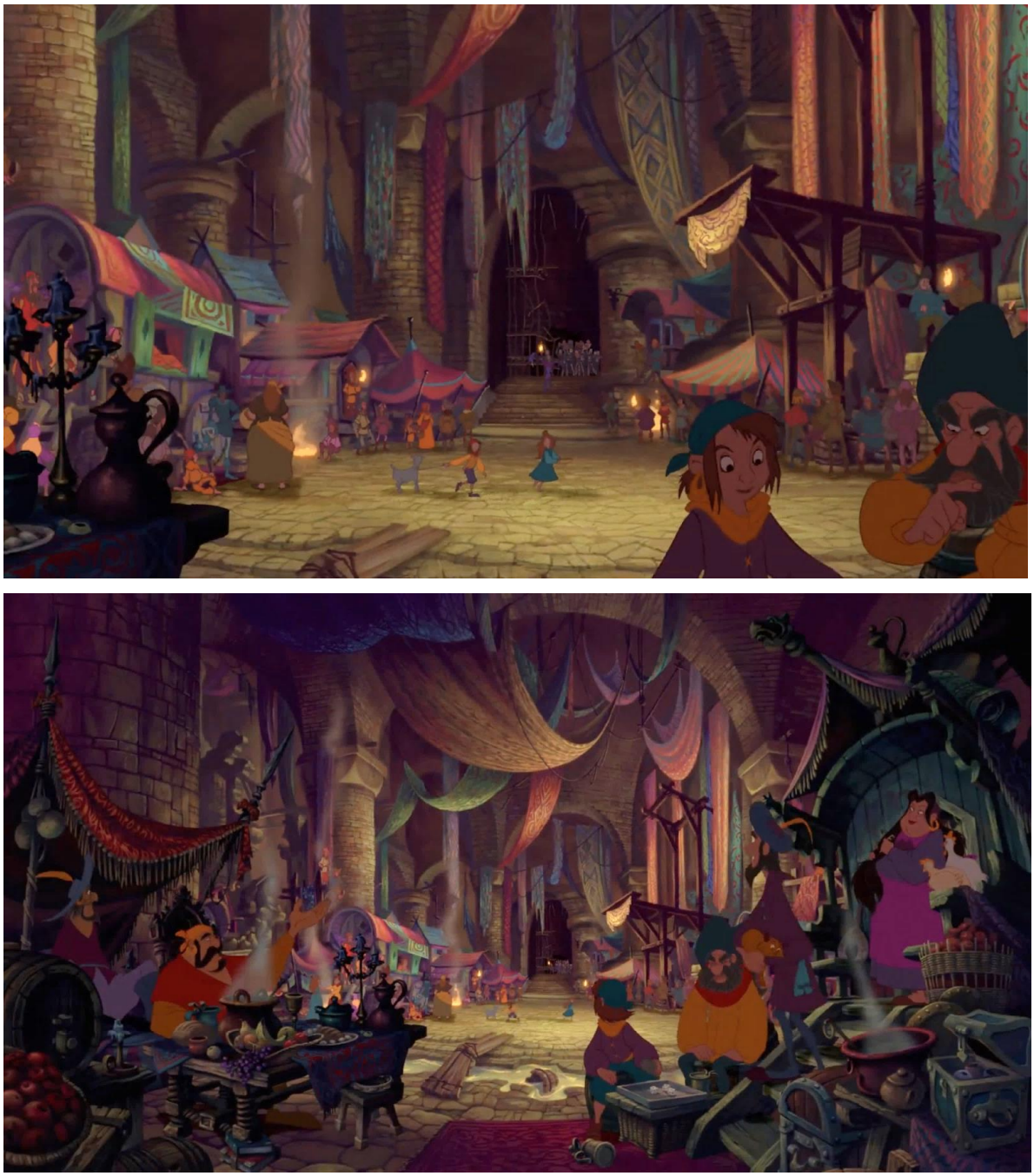
In conjunction with their physical features, the accessorizing and clothing of the Romani women further speaks to their appearance and what it conveys. The vibrancy of their clothing and hair bands, coupled with their gold jewelry (mainly earrings and bangles) espouses a particular aesthetic commonly associated with the "Romani lifestyle", that is meant to display a carefree, colorful life in the very vibrancy and richness of their appearance. The mostly warm color palette, following color theory (a topic oft-discussed in the art world since antiquity, but which is succinctly summarized in a brief case study by Beckwith (1917), invokes feelings associated with earthiness and homeliness, especially given the selected tones and their appearance alongside gold jewelry. This warm coloring can be juxtaposed with the black that Frollo wears (a marker for villainhood) as well as the cooler colors of nobles in the "God Help the Outcasts" segment inside the cathedral (cool tones usually meant to convey a more detached or negative emotionality) and the drab browns and grays of most non-Romani Parisians in the film, but being more similar to the jewel tones of Esmeralda's clothing (marking her as

Romani) and the bright festival attire which the non-Romani Parisians wear. This creates an association between the Romani and the festival, one which was already placed due to Clopin and Esmeralda's central roles in that sequence, but which is conveyed through costuming similarities here as well. This association between Roma and the earlier partying of the Parisians helps to establish the Roma - and Roma women, in particular, given Esmeralda's earlier role and the reactions of the Romani women in the Court of Miracles sequence - with boldness, festivities, and public performance, further entrenching them into the role of performer for non-Roma audiences, which Esmeralda is shown to inhabit.

2.2.2: Court of Miracles: Romani Women's Actions

The Romani women in the Court of Miracles are not seen to partake in the defense of the catacombs, like the men through the apprehending of Quasimodo and Phoebus, but rather are depicted as maintaining their homes instead. It is therefore only fitting that the homes match in tone to the women who maintain them. The vibrancy of the women's appearance, coupled with the less-than-conventional aesthetics, is transferred over to the houses of the Court of Miracles (as seen in the screenshots below). These houses are actually mainly caravans, reflecting the belief that Roma are nomads who often move around and need an easily-transportable lifestyle (despite the fact that the Roma of the film have supposedly lived in the Court of Miracles for decades by this point, the stereotype persists regardless).

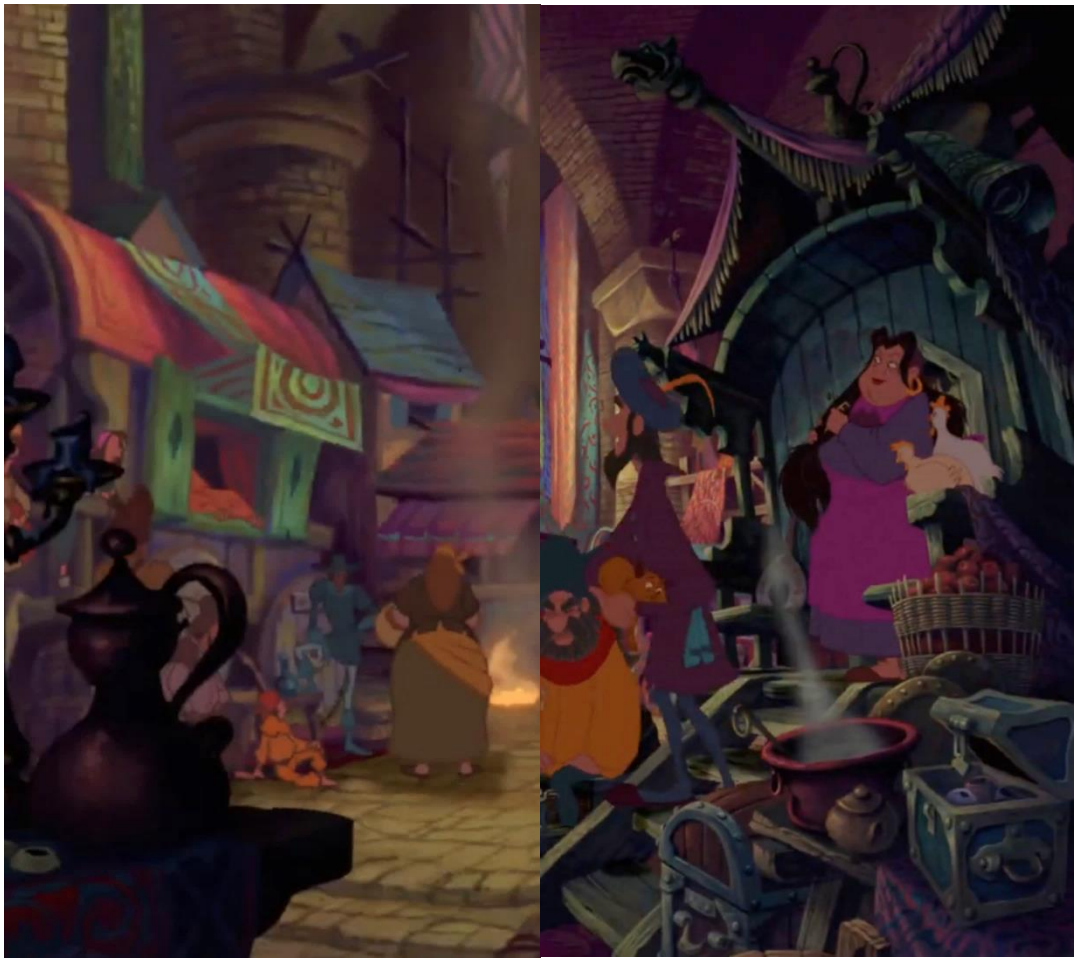
The houses, and the rest of the environment of the Court of Miracles, are colorful and "organic", with "lots of different fabrics draped around", as the directors share in their commentary of the movie (1997), and which can be seen in the pictures below. This conception of Romani people being "organic" and more in tune with nature and natural rhythms of the world due to their nomadic, rugged lifestyle is yet another stereotype which has hounded Roma since romanticization of this concept began in the 18th century, particularly in media (Pokorny 2009). It is this conception - reflected not merely in the color palette, but also the proximity of the buildings and the items which populate this scene, the cluttered but purposeful use of all available space - which arguably directed the entirety of the Roma's appearance and much of their actions in the film, and which influenced how the Court of Miracles would look. It also can be seen as a method of demonstrating the talents of the Romani people, as they were able to establish a self-sufficient community - where particularly their weaving, cooking, and home-making [all coded as female tasks, given the people who are seen to be performing them] - are especially of note.



Two screenshots from different points in a pull-back shot of the Court of Miracles, establishing the realm of the Romani world within Trousdale and Wise's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996).

The desire of - and success in - making a home out of the catacombs is thus a reflection of the Romani women's exceptional home-making abilities, therefore, especially when given very little to work with and living in constant danger of Frollo's attacks against their

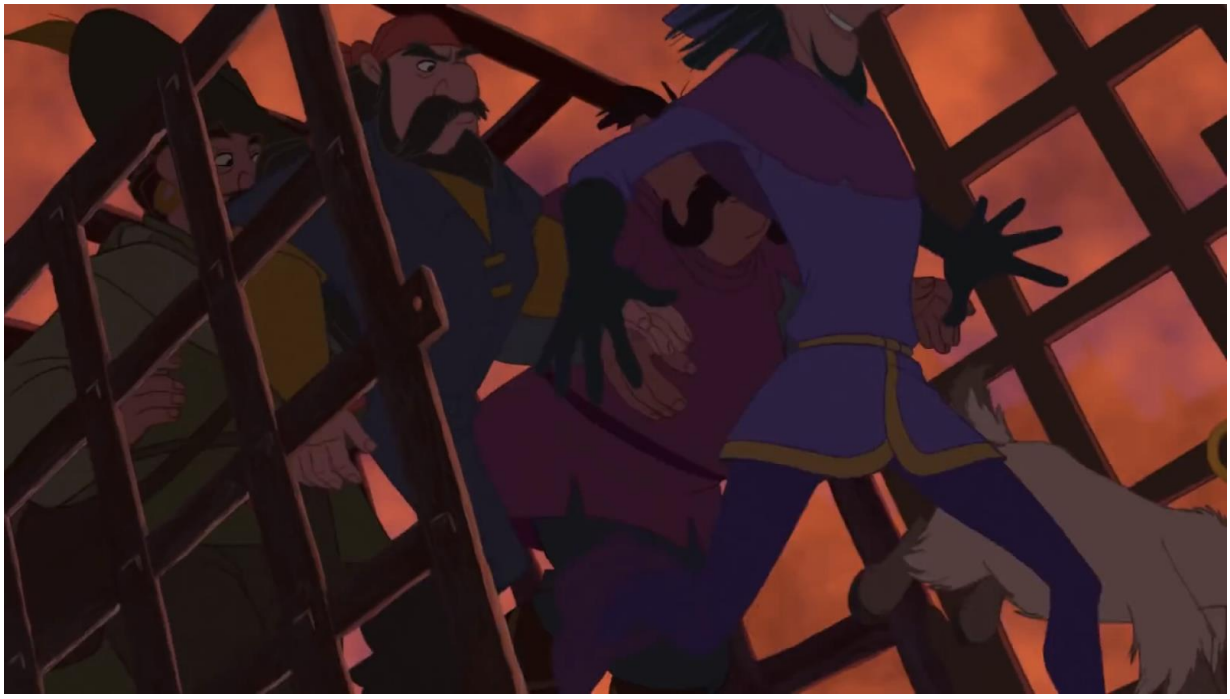
community. The directors share in their commentary that the Romani settlement was meant to "contrast [the] coldness of [the] underground liar", to show how the Roma "turned it really bright and welcoming with all this color and tapestry" (1997). This creation of a "welcoming" space - even amid the catacombs' death, damp, and dark - is a testament to the skills of the women who establish the warmth and life of the homes (as depicted in the pictures below), and who perform the labor of its maintenance. This labor encompasses caring for children and animals, cooking, cleaning, and cozying the spaces, all of which are considered traditionally feminine roles for someone to undertake in the Global North context. So, while most of the Romani men were lying in wait to defend their home and protect it from "trespassers" and "spies", it was the Romani women who ensured there was a home worth returning to. This reinforcement of traditional gender dynamics in the Romani community of the film reproduces the idea that Romani communities embrace traditional gender roles, and Romani women are most often either homemakers (like many of these women appear to be), or performers like Esmerelda - both stereotypes about Romani women that persist to today. Yet it also can be seen as a true testament to the genuine talent it takes to alter a space so profoundly into such a livable - enjoyable, even - environment, which is worth protecting and maintaining.

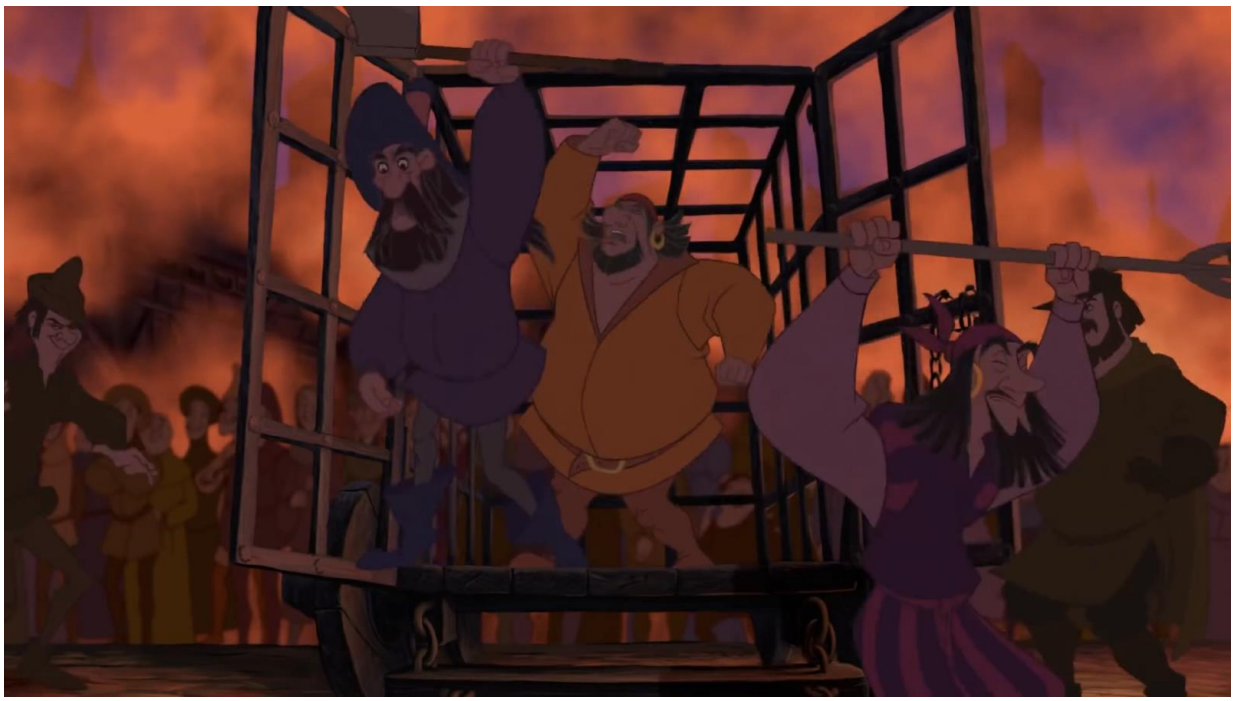


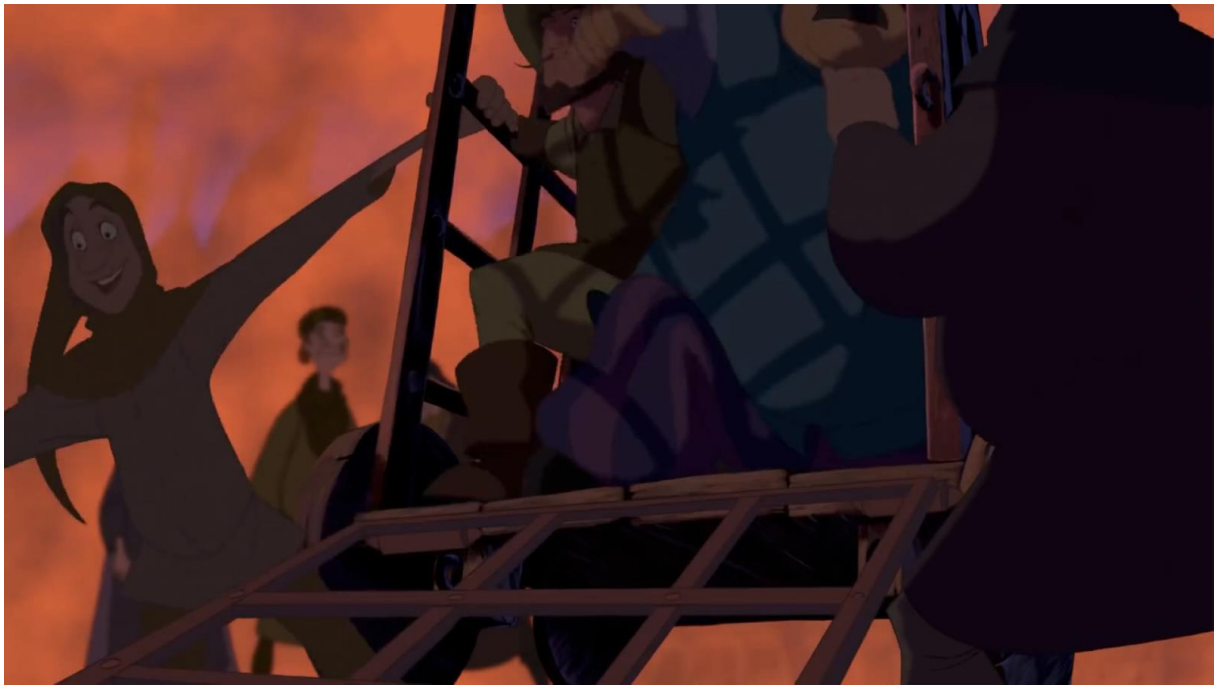
Screenshots of Romani women in the Court of Miracles, where they are seen in domestic settings, by their homes which they care for, from Trousdale and Wise's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996).

Beyond the work required to maintain the home, though, the Romani women in the Court of Miracles are shown to partake in the wider community affairs and social politics as well. When Clopin leads Quasimodo and Phoebus into the Court, the women gather alongside the men and children to witness the show trial put on for the two intruders. They join in the heckling (and indeed, it is three women who are shown to do the round of booing at the announcement of the heroes' supposed crimes), and are witness to the justice which Clopin (as the seeming leader, serving as lawyer, judge, and executioner, "all in one", as he shares) sees fit to deliver. Their civic participation here hints at a more egalitarian society than would have been common in mainstream Paris for the time period, not merely in terms of equal rights across gender divides, but also class as well.

Yet after their participation in the trial, these Romani women seem to almost disappear after Frollo's arrival to the Court of Miracles. They can be seen running about after Phoebus announces Frollo is coming, and they can be seen trying to escape and ultimately being captured once Frollo makes his entrance and has his guards seize the entire community. But in the following sequence, when the Romani men are shown to be in three cages that the non-Roma Parisians break open so that they may join the fight against Frollo and his guards, no women are depicted among them. And throughout the final scenes of the movie, as the fight continues through the climax, and non-Romani men and women, as well as Romani men, can be seen fighting, there are no clear Romani female characters depicted among them (see images below). And upon the resolution of the film, when Quasimodo takes Esmeralda's hand and emerges from the cathedral to the cheers of the assembled crowd, all the Roma besides Clopin and Esmeralda seem to have left the scene altogether (see images below). The remaining background characters all share the white skin, Anglo-Saxon features, (generally speaking) aesthetically appealing faces, and drably-colored and relatively more modest clothing of the non-Romani Parisians from throughout the film.

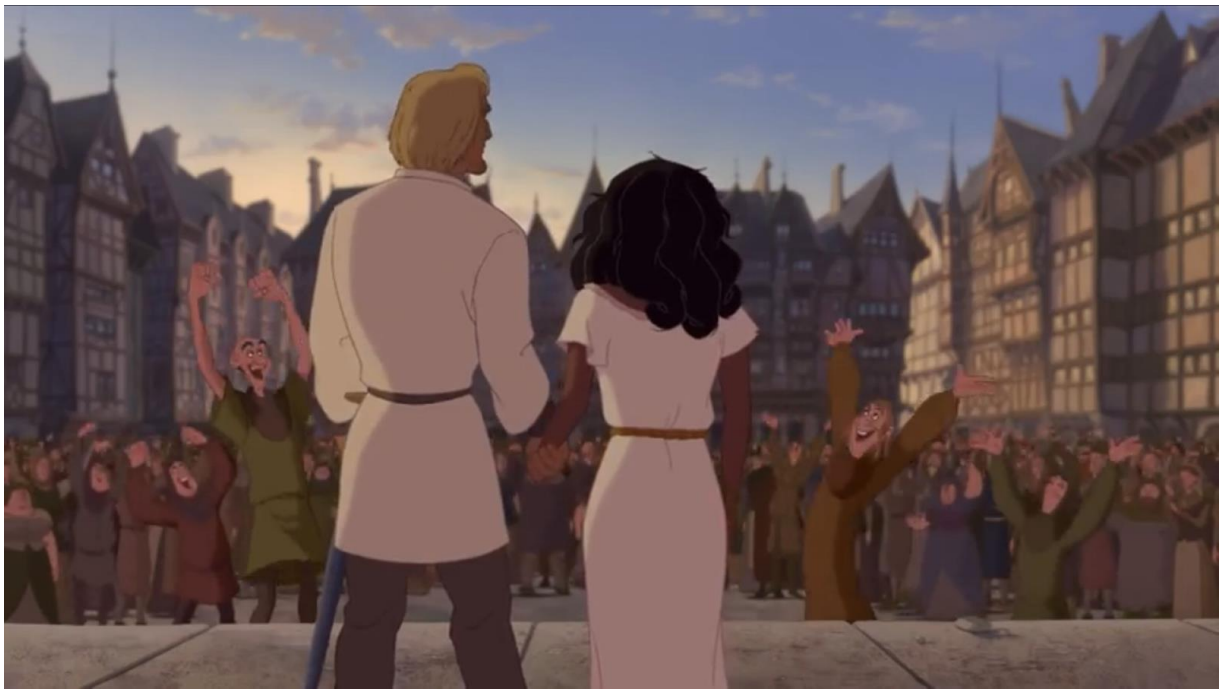


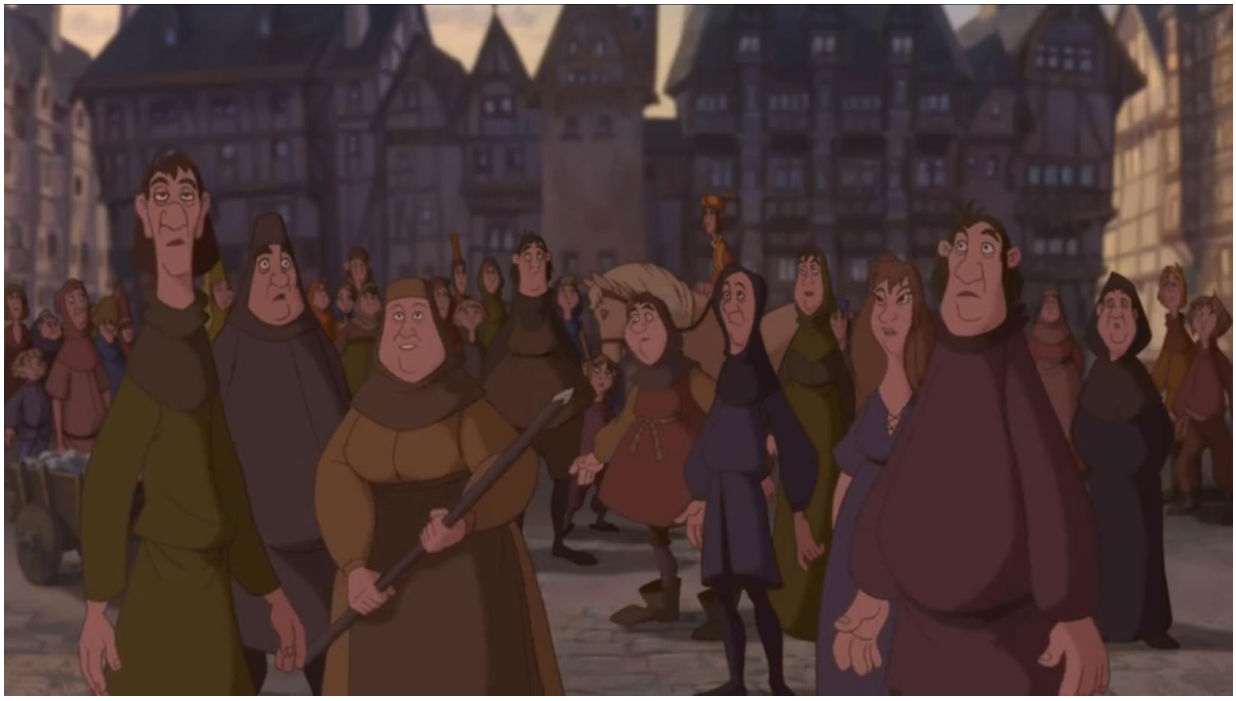


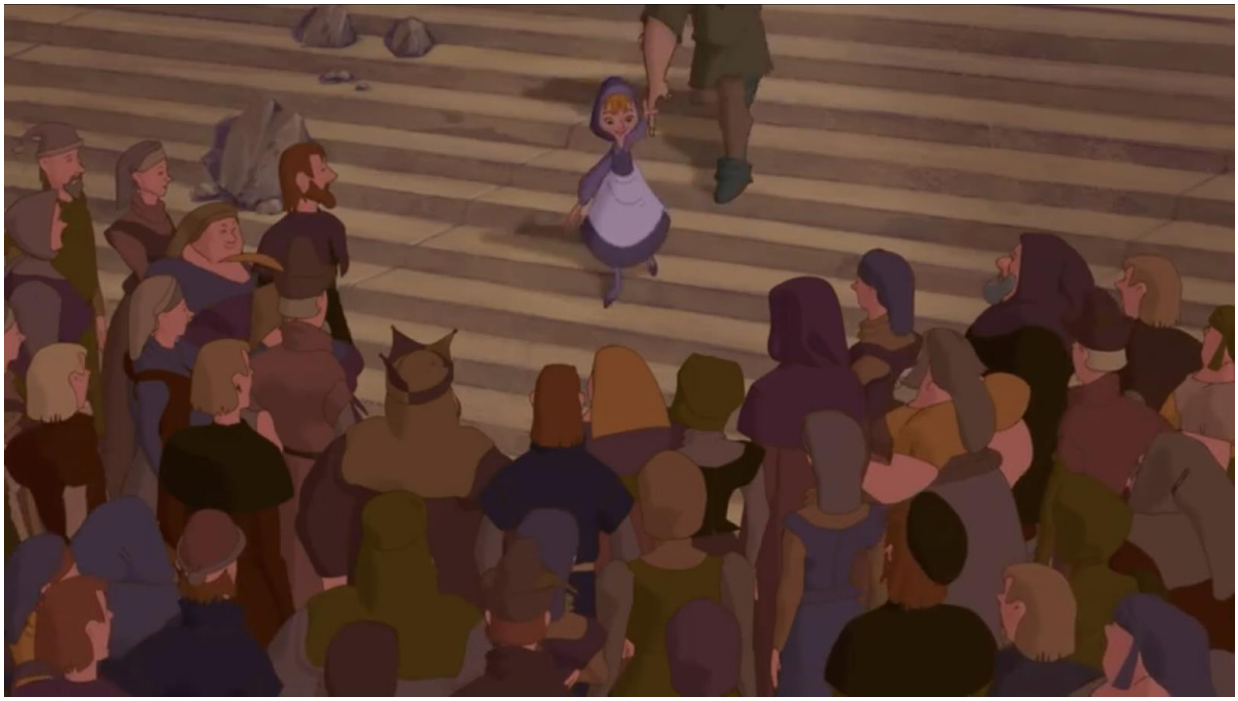


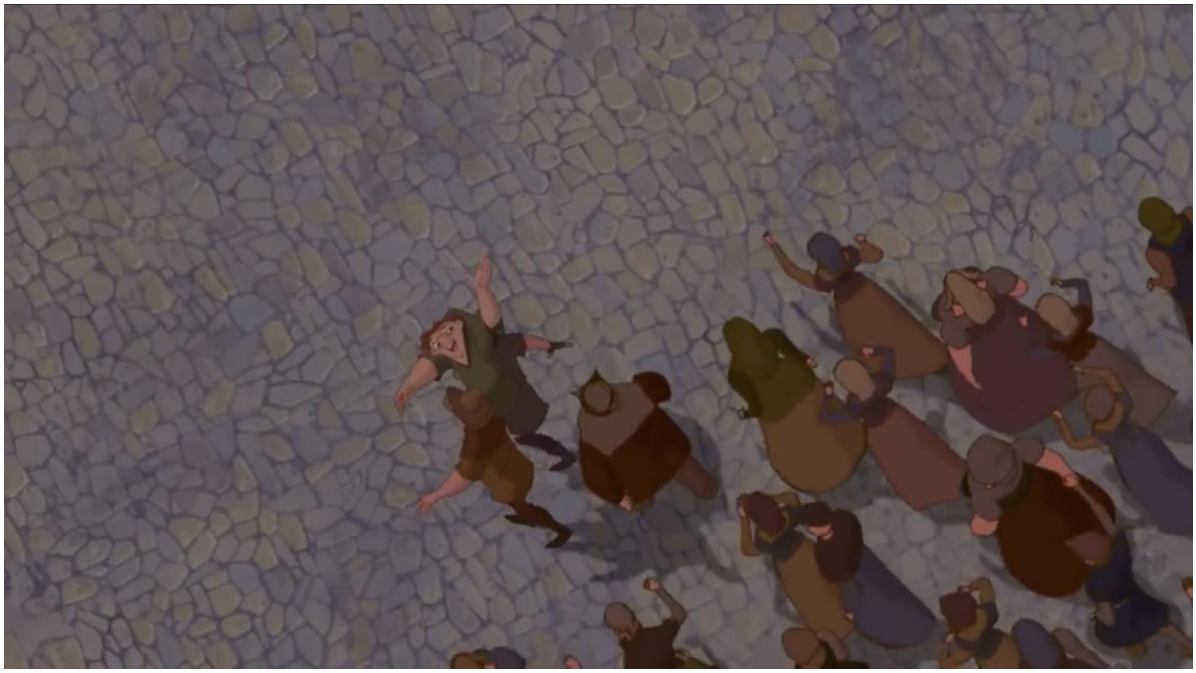
Above: Screenshots of the Roma being released from their cages by the other Parisians for the fight scene at the film's climax, with no Romani women depicted among those emerging from the cages (Trousdale and Wise 1996).

Below: Screenshots from the resolution of the film and the ending scene, showing a lack of Romani characters altogether (Trousdale and Wise 1996).









Logically speaking, the Romani women should have been in both parts of this sequence, if only because they were captured alongside the Romani men and would be sentenced to very similar - if not the same - fates based on sharing the crime of being Roma, in Frollo's eyes. There also was very limited time between overtaking the Court of Miracles and beginning Esmeralda's execution scene, in which for Frollo and his guards to have separated the Roma by gender, and taken the women (likely with the children, who also appear to not be in the sequence) to a separate location to be kept. Their absence, therefore, could be a mere oversight on the part of the animation team. The directors do share in their commentary (1997) that there are meant to be thousands of Roma in the Court of Miracles, and they simply could not all be shown on screen at the same time due to the effort it would have taken the animation team and the time constraints they had in sticking to production schedule, so camera angles are utilized to try to emphasis a large number and strategic cuts are chosen to demonstrate a few characters in more detail as representative of the larger population on screen. The fact that no Romani women were selected to be among the closer shots of characters in these sequences (and Roma at all, in the ending scene) thus may be a lack in consideration for these characters, but should not be intended as understanding that they are missing from the scenes altogether.

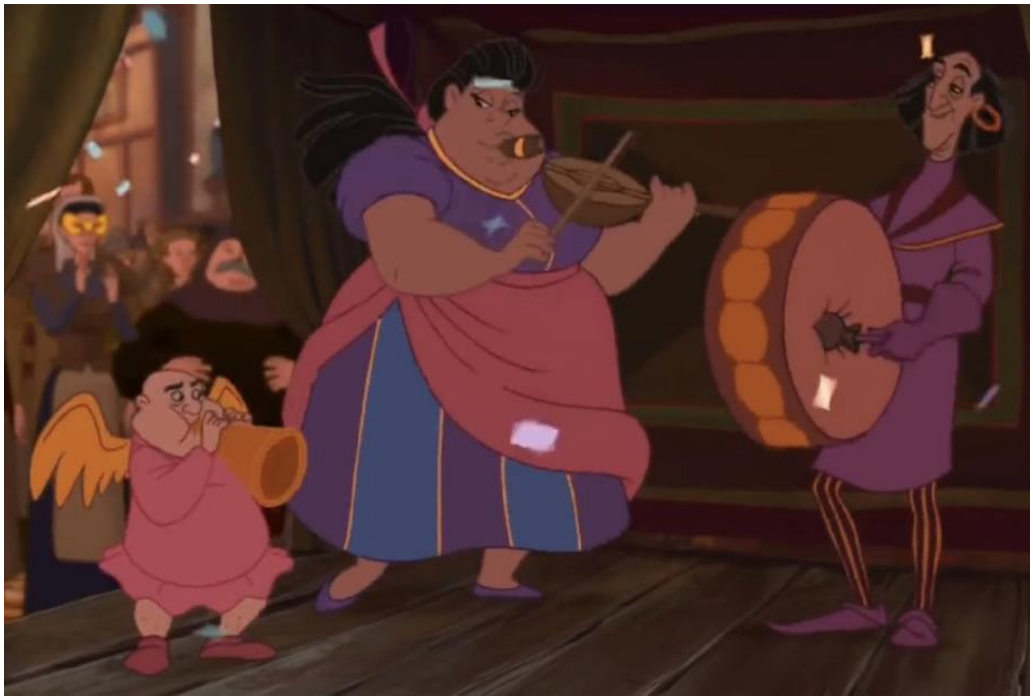
The crowds throughout the film were, however, made with Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI, still relatively new at the time); the directors shared that the animation team was able to design just a few types of characters, and then change small parts of their appearance across other characters, so as to have a few hundred character designs total, and these designs were finally multiplied until the proper number of background characters were created for a

scene (1997). In this instance, much of the characters that truly made up a background to the main action within a scene was left up to the computer to populate and fill, and it would not be unusual for the animation team to reuse the exact same crowd of characters from the Feast of Fools (which was made up of only non-Romani characters), rather than animating and adding background Romani characters to the crowd in the climax, even if this would be more accurate to the storyline at this point. Once more, the timeline of production may have necessitated this decision, or it may have merely been an oversight on the creative team's part; either way, it seems inaccurate to say that the female Romani characters were not present at the climax, or that the male Romani characters disappeared somehow from the scene after leaving their cages armed and ready to fight. While logically these characters should be present here, and likely were intended to be based on the trajectory of the plotline at this point in the film, their lack of visible inclusion is strange, and (perhaps unintentionally) conveys that the Romani women were not part of saving the day at the climax, and the Romani community was excluded from the celebrative victory over Frollo in the final scene once Quasimodo emerges.

2.2.3: Outside the Court of Miracles

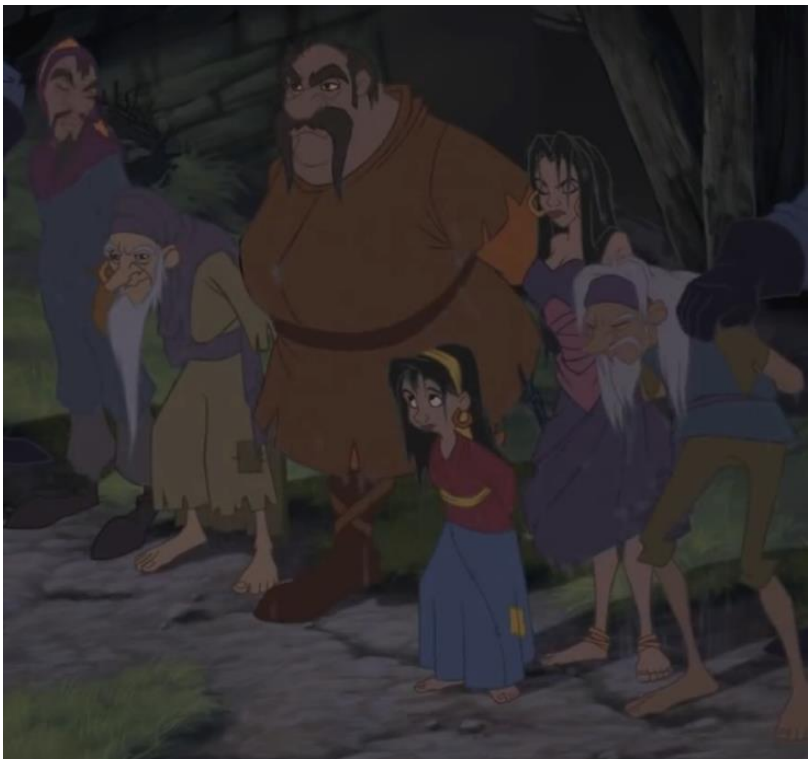
While the majority of Romani characters are shown to be inside the Court of Miracles, a few are seen outside of it. There are a few Roma who perform as musicians, mainly alongside Esmeralda or at the Feast of Fools. There are additionally those Roma who appear to live outside the Court of Miracles, and are among the first people whom Frollo targets once he begins searching in earnest for Esmeralda, during the Paris is Burning sequence of the film. Among these Romani characters outside the Court of Miracles, there are, of course, Romani women, however they are always fewer in number than the Romani men seen. This could be because the audience is meant to believe that most of the Romani women are involved in keeping home in the Court of Miracles (the most prominent activity Romani women are shown to do in the film, aside from Esmeralda's dancing), so they do not seek to perform in the street as musicians and instead leave this to the men (of the Roma pictured playing music in the film, only one is a woman, pictured below with some of her male counterparts). It could also be based on the idea that - for whatever reason - Romani women are less likely or less desiring to live outside the wider Romani community, hence why the Roma targeted in Paris is Burning are largely men (see images below). Or, it could simply be that the creative team did not notice this discrepancy; studies show that - due to the pervasiveness of a patriarchal preference to men and their thoughts, actions, and behaviors - that a less-than-equal presence of women is perceived as equal, and a representation that is actually equal is perceived as being dominated

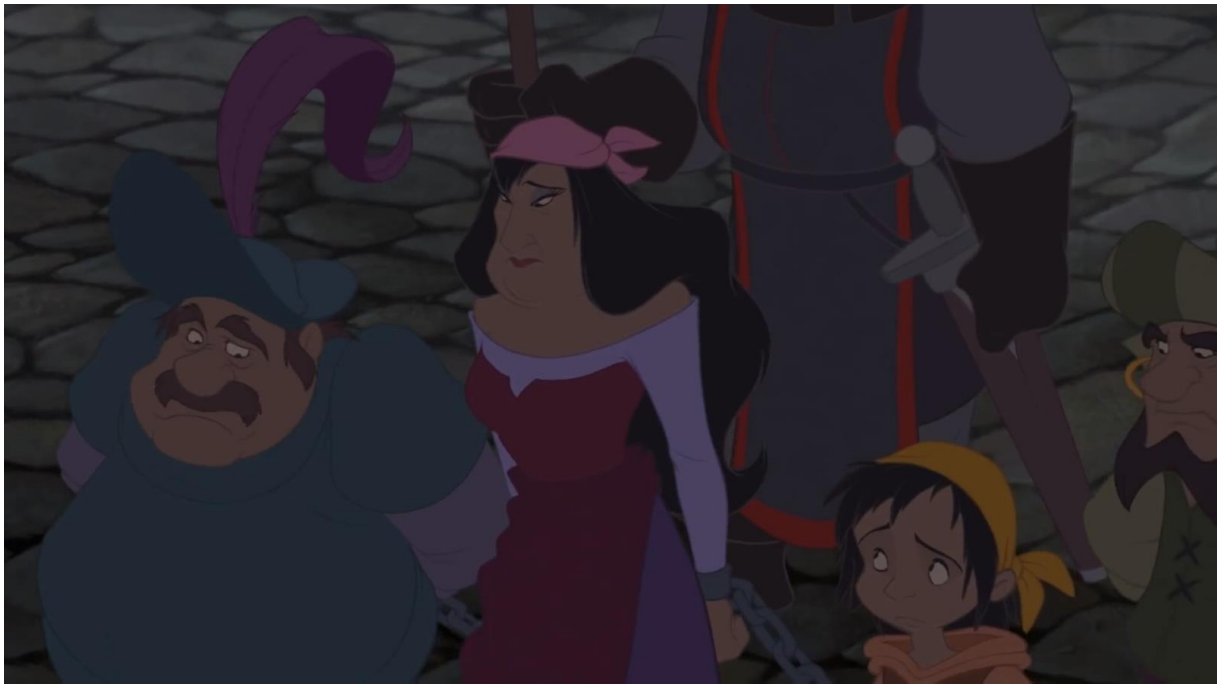
by women (see: Spender (1980); Cutler and Scott (1990); Smith and Choueiti (2010); Narayanan et al. (2015)).

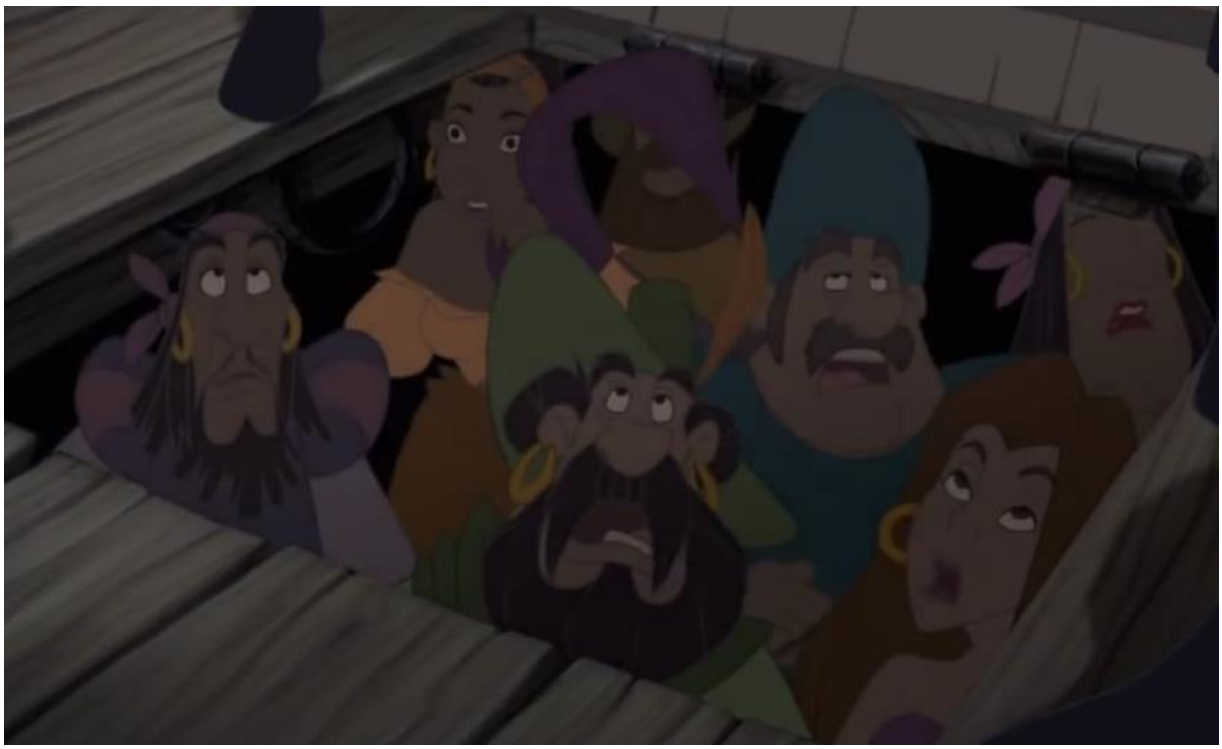


Above: Romani musicians at Feast of Fools, with the sole female musician being depicted in the middle of the group, smoking a cigar (Trousdale and Wise 1996).

Below: Romani victims of Frollo's search for Esmeralda in the Paris is Burning sequence of the films, showing the number disparity between male and female Romani characters in the sequence (Trousdale and Wise 1996).







Whatever the reason, this lack of Romani women being seen outside the Court of Miracles, and their roles as either performers (a stereotype) or victims of Frollo's abuse, contributes greatly to their overall invisibility within the film, outside of the two significant female Romani characters. It also establishes Roma, in general, and Romani women, in particular, as being especially community-focused and distanced from non-Roma, and unwilling to engage with non-Romani people very much, when the most significant numbers of Roma in the film were within their own community. In the film, at least, this can be

interpreted as an attempt at hiding from Frollo and his attacks against Romani people, as the Roma's ability to evade elimination has depended on their capacity for avoiding Frollo finding their location.

2.2.4: Significance

Overall, the one-dimensional portrayal of the female Romani characters who are neither Quasimodo's mother nor Esmeralda is a failure on the part of the film's team to show a more diverse understanding of the Romani community. A more nuanced version of this oft-stereotyped community could have had a significant impact on later film depictions of Romani women (at the very least in other adaptations of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*), and painted them in a light that is more critical of previous representations of Roma that rely on so many of these assumptions (Victor Hugo's novel being one of them). No effort was made to explain where the Parisian Roma come from, what their lives were like before Frollo or even how they are handling Frollo's attacks against them beyond hiding out in the catacombs and ambushing potential spies. These scenes of Roma and their lives reinforce many of the negative conceptions of Roma, clearly divide the Romani people along gendered lines in the Court, and almost forget them as existing altogether outside the homes they tend. Given that finding the Court of Miracles has been Frollo's stated objective since the main action of the film began - in order to wipe out the Roma who have been protecting themselves inside it and therefore complete his ethnic cleansing of the city - more effort should have been made into depicting these people and their lives, beyond as merely targets and stereotypes. This is especially poignant, given the violent history of persecution against Roma which has persisted across Europe for centuries, and where discriminatory and violent events such as those in the storyline would not be totally out of place.

While the non-Roma Parisians did not get an exceptional amount of screen time devoted to themselves or the historical contexts of their lives either, their existence in the majority society and the wider background of the film - not to mention their comparatively minimal struggles within the plot, as a group which is able to avoid Frollo's persecution unless being tied to these very Romani characters - would largely negate the necessity of such a devotion of time. And while a longer pause on the Romani community may have slowed the pacing of the plot, or meant a possible loss of other content in the film due to concerns about the length of the movie, it would not have been exceptionally difficult to perhaps change some of the dialogue in this section of the film (especially the song "Court of Miracles", which references the duplicity of the Romani community and its ability to scam and con non-Roma), which

would have been an important component to a more balanced presentation of the Roma. A wider engagement with the female members of the community - including them in the capture of the heroes, showing men tending to the home instead, animating a more equitable number of female-to-male Romani characters, having women animated into the cages and subsequent fight scene at the climax, expanding the background crowd characters' animation to include Roma in the climax, et cetera - would have been a significant step as well. While it would have possibly taken more time and attention to do such things, their impact on the overall film and its depictions of Romani women would have gone a lot further in a more just and equitable direction.

Chapter 3 – Leading Lady, But Leading Where?: Esmeralda's Contestations as The Lead Woman of Color

In *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), Esmeralda is clearly both the most prominent female and the most prominent Romani character in the film. Her depiction in the film is influenced by numerous archetypes - many of which are racialized and/or sexualized - while particularly through her interactions with other characters and their beliefs about her - especially with Frollo - she is able to complicate and even contest these conceptions of her.

3.1: First Impressions and Familiar Expressions: Esmeralda and Other Disney Characters

The audience is first introduced to Esmeralda as a character when she is seen dancing in a square in front of Notre Dame, following the introduction of Captain Phoebus. She appears slightly in the background, and in full-body profile, as Phoebus is seen to be approaching and the woman tells her child to "stay away" from Roma, who will "steal [them] blind" (16:58-17:02), offering the audience a glimpse at mainly her figure and clothing rather than her face or its expression. This is not revealed until after Captain Phoebus deposits some coins in the hat placed in front of the performance area, looks up, and meets Esmeralda's eyes, clearly surprised and captivated by her at this first meeting. This introduction to Esmeralda serves to establish several components of who she is and how the other characters will likely treat her.

3.1.1: Male Gaze and A "Spark"

It is noteworthy that the first time Esmeralda's face is seen by the viewers, it is through the eyes of Phoebus. This is established by the captain of the guard looking up, then visibly stopping and appearing taken aback as he sees Esmeralda's dancing figure, and then her face as she turns towards him and they lock eyes. The camera cuts from a close-up (chest-up, centered on the face) on Phoebus, focusing on how his expression changes when he sees Esmeralda, to a more mid-range shot (further away than the camera was when focusing on Phoebus, to show more of Esmeralda's body, as she is still dancing prior to her pause as she

meets Phoebus's eyes) of Esmeralda herself, from a frontal perspective rather than the profile one which she was shown in as Phoebus approached the scene earlier.

The camera here literally adopts the male gaze, taking in Esmeralda from Phoebus's perspective as he sees her for the first time. Their reactions to one another - each pausing, and changing facial expressions to demonstrate acknowledgement of the other seeing them - as well as the camera reversals in between the two to showcase their positive receptions of their attentions and respective acknowledgements, helps to establish a connection between the two of them. In fact, the directors in their commentary (1997) share that this moment is meant to illustrate the "spark" which these two characters share, from their very first interaction, serving as the start of their romantic subplot that carries through the rest of the movie. The fact that this scene is conveyed through the camera reversals shows the reciprocal nature of the "spark", especially as the two characters are seen to react positively to one another. The smile and slight eyebrow raise which Phoebus gives Esmeralda demonstrates an openness and slight surprise to the attraction he feels, while the smirk and playful tambourine shake - and accompanying hip movements - from Esmeralda highlight her awareness of this attraction, and a willingness to encourage - if not reciprocate - the feeling.

There is, however, the aspect of money and wider power imbalances to consider in this scene, and the potential encouragement that Esmeralda gives Phoebus, which seems largely unexamined based on the directors' commentary. Esmeralda performs in the street as a means to sustain herself and Djali, her pet goat. She tells Quasimodo later in the movie that her dancing "keeps bread on the table", after saying that if she had Quasimodo's talent for wood-carving, then "you wouldn't find me dancing in the street for coins" (39:51-39:55). Her slightly wistful tone here implies that she longs to not have to perform for money, and that - despite having a talent for it, as Quasimodo points out - she sees it largely just as a means of income, and one which is needed to keep her and Djali fed.

This casts her interactions with Phoebus - and indeed, all her performances throughout the film - in the light of being something necessary for Esmeralda's survival, serving as her primary means of income and the way in which she is able to provide for herself and her pet. Considering this, it would not be unnatural for Esmeralda to act playful, seductive, and encouraging to Phoebus - especially when he was just seen to give coins to Esmeralda and the other Roma performing - in order to perhaps earn more money from his interest. This is not to say that her interest in him may not have been genuine, or that Phoebus saw her as solely a commodity which he could give money to in order to watch her dance and play her instrument, but this transactional dynamic is not one which should be dismissed entirely from the equation.

Furthermore, Phoebus is noticeably a soldier - given his armor and sword - and a high ranking one at that - given the type of sword which he carries, if nothing else, as identified in his later interaction with a guard who carries only a dagger in comparison to Phoebus's more suitably battle-ready longer-range weapon. Given the persecution which the Roma have faced in Paris, under Frollo's reign in particular, it would not be out of the question for Esmeralda to act in an encouraging, accepting manner towards Phoebus's appreciation of her, as a possible effort to avoid conflict with an enforcer of the law. However, given she does not behave in any similar way to the guards who later come by and start to question and harass her, and she only briefly maintains an illusion of feminine helplessness - which she weaponizes to distract the guards - upon her would-be arrest at the Feast of Fools, this particular dynamic seems less likely to have influenced Esmeralda in the scene.

3.1.2: Male Gaze and Esmeralda's Disney Princess Appearance

In addition to the camera literally following a man's gaze as the audience is first introduced to Esmeralda as a character, the male gaze is the lens through which Esmeralda is designed and interpreted as a character. This is true in the most literal sense - given the male directors and producer, lead writer (Tab Murphy, lead for both screenplay and the adaptation of the storyline from the novel), and the lead character developer and supervising animator for Esmeralda (Tony Fucile), were all men who had significant say in what Esmeralda's design, appearance, characteristics, and actions would be. The main creative team being male, with there only being some female team members working on Esmeralda and the movie at large, therefore meant that she was largely the creation of men, and their view of women. This translates into a character that is conventionally attractive to a heterosexual man, and who is able to be commodified through these conventionally attractive features, which include enhanced feminine features and a sexualized Exotic Othering of the character that was particular to women of color as well (to be discussed among other princesses of color in section 3.1.3).

The employment of the male gaze in character appearance is a commonality for other Disney princesses as well, given they have all been - up to this point, in 1996 - conventionally attractive, able-bodied, heterosexual, romantic counterparts to the male lead of their films. Esmeralda is, in fact, the first "princess" to not end up with the male lead in the film, though she does end up with Phoebus, another prominent male figure from the film's storyline.

In her character design, Esmeralda is seen to have a pronounced butt and bust, a thin waist and wide hips, slim arms and legs, a flat stomach, long hair, big eyes, small nose, tasteful

make-up that accentuates a slightly bolder version of a "natural" beauty look (namely, lipstick colored to make her lips appear fuller, and black eyeliner to make her eyes appear brighter), and overall well-maintained grooming of her appearance (shaped eyebrows, styled hair, accessorized outfit, clean and flattering clothing, et cetera), as can be seen in the picture of her below. She additionally has a thin neck, wrists, and ankles, slim and long fingers, and gold jewelry accents across her body (ankle, wrists, ear), as well as her clothes (corset, hip scarf). Particularly the gold accents to her clothing draw the viewer's eye along their lines, which focus mainly from under her breasts to over her stomach, and across her hips and waist to along her thighs.

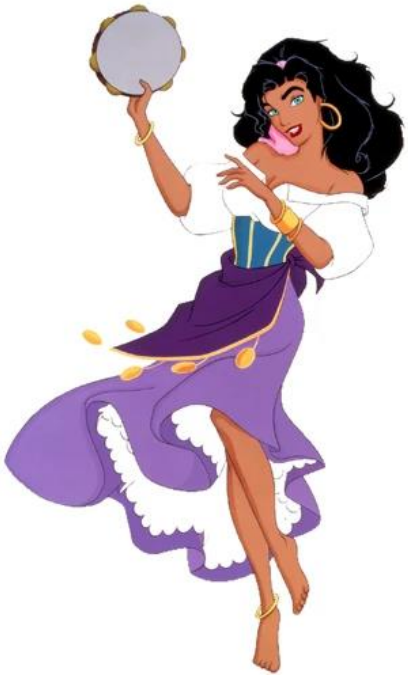
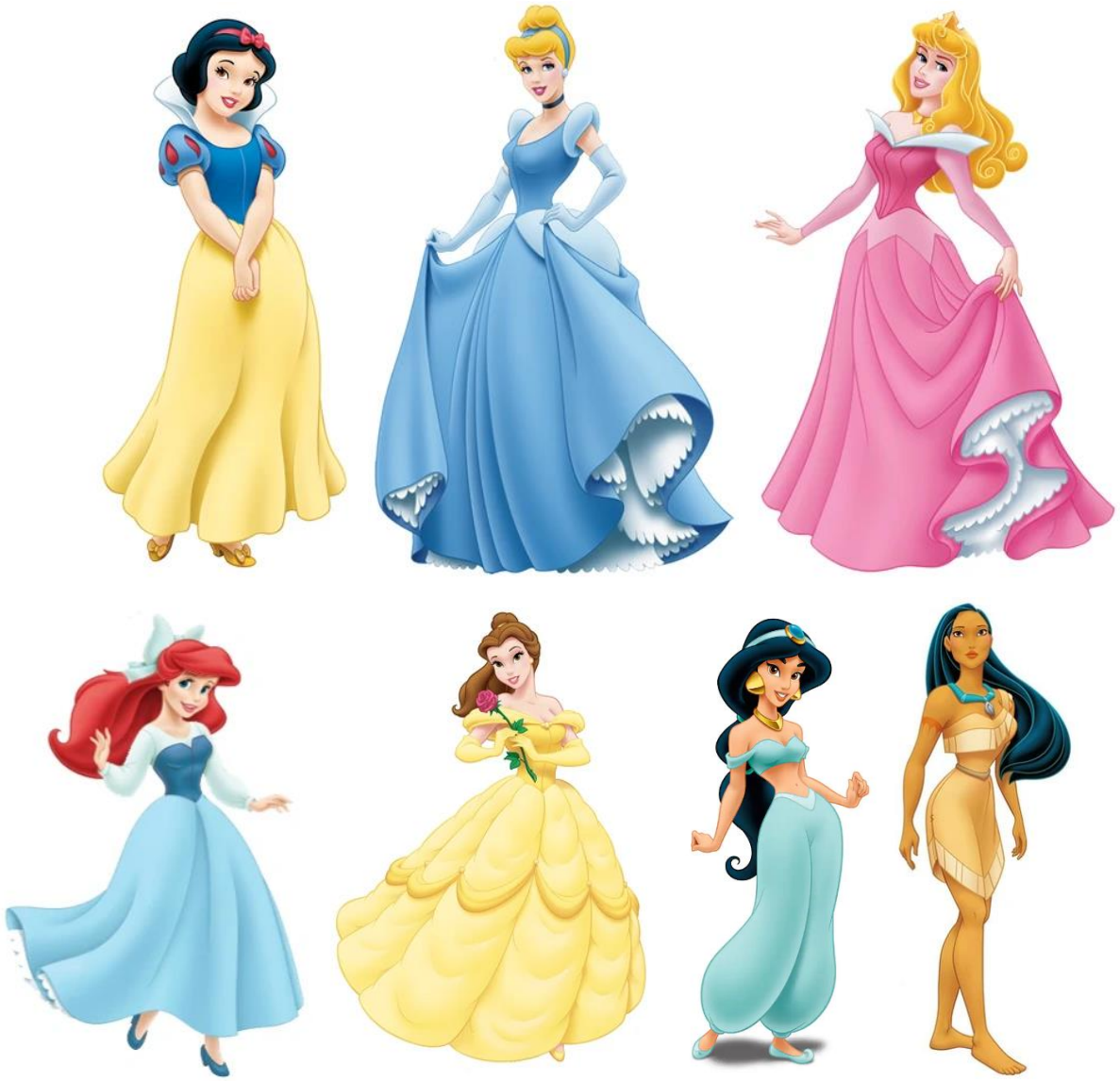


Image of Esmeralda's character design from her Disney Princess Wiki Fandom page (Fandom 2023).

Very similar bodily proportions can be viewed in the other Disney princesses which had been created up to this point: Snow White (1937), Cinderella (1950), Aurora (1959), Ariel (1989), Belle (1991), Jasmine (1992), and Pocahontas (1995), as seen in the images below. Furthermore, patterns in costuming emerge as well: all wearing dresses (with the exception of Jasmine, who wears a bedlah top and salwar pants, with an exposed midriff), mainly all with some form of jewelry, all with some type of outfit accessory(ies), and each dressed according to what was considered fashionable for their contexts, following time period and location. The richness in detail of their various princess outfits (which not all of them wear throughout the duration of the film - Cinderella and Aurora, for instance, spend the majority of their time on screen in maid and peasant clothing, respectively, to be discussed in the next paragraph)

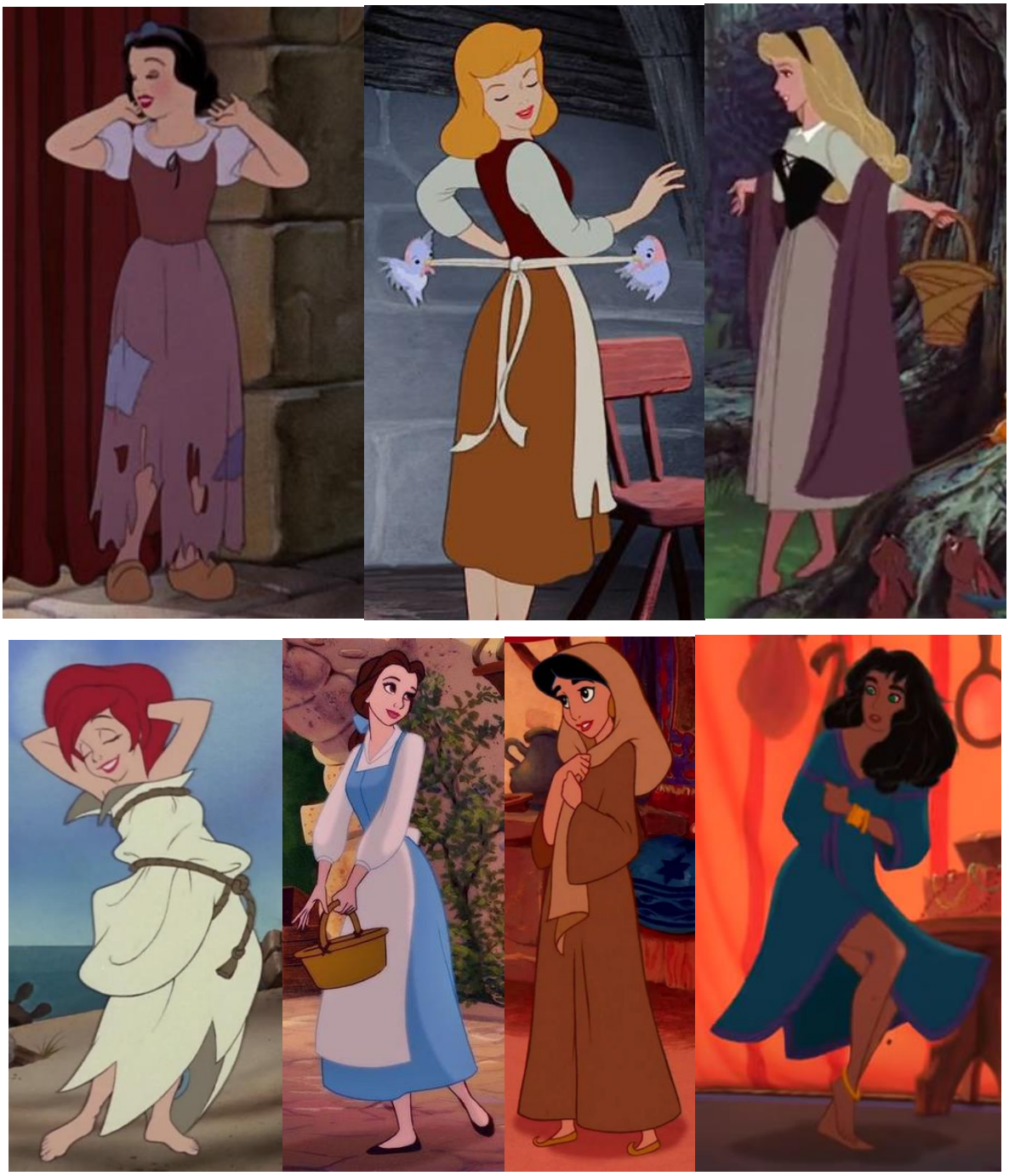
highlights their social status, and the vibrancy in color - along with their exceptional natural beauty - separates the princesses from any other noble women who may be featured in their films; Cinderella, Aurora, and Belle, for instance, have scenes of them dancing with their princes while various nobles stand in the background, significantly less vibrant than the princesses in beauty and dress.



Images of the character designs for Snow White, Cinderella, Aurora, Ariel, Belle, Jasmine, and Pocahontas, each taken from their respective Disney Princess Wiki Fandom page (Fandom 2023), with the exception of Jasmine, which was taken from a 2015 Disney Parks blog post (Gravante 2015).

While nearly all of them princesses have a costume change at some point in their film (the exception being Pocahontas), their outfits - even when dressed as scullery maids, peasants,

shipwreck victims, and other non-royal variations of themselves - highlight their supposedly natural beauty in their forms and faces, that are emphasized to attract the viewer's eye. And despite the physical exertions and often dirty environments of these princesses at varying points through the films, none of the grime, dirt or sweat that should be present is visible in any form on them. In these instances of "dressing down", it is also not uncommon for the princesses to be shown adjusting their appearances, for various reasons ranging from primping to solidifying a disguise to preserving modesty (as is the case for Esmeralda in the selected image, where she was interrupted while changing before her Feast of Fools performance), as can be seen in the images below. This reinforces the association between Disney princesses and conventionally attractive appearances, and demonstrates that the characters often put at least some effort into maintaining said appearances, though only minimally as their beauty is seen as a natural facet of who they are. Even in these outfits, their feminine, hourglass figure is often demonstrable, and their faces tend to display pleasant - or at least pleasantly neutral - expressions, again as seen below.

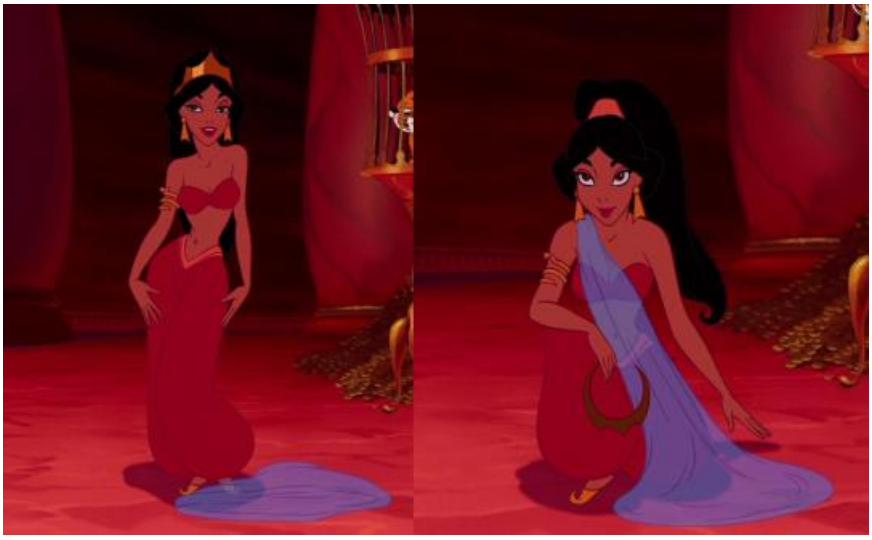


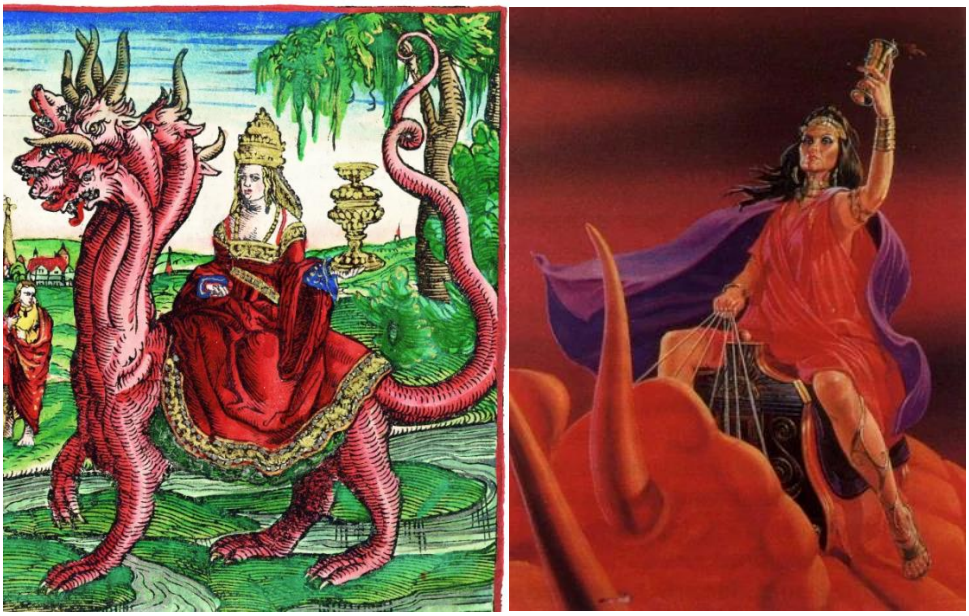
Screenshots taken from the following films, in order from left to right, top row followed by bottom row: Hand, Pearce, Cottrell, Morey, Jackson, and Sharpsteen's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937); Jackson, Luske, and Geronimi's *Cinderella* (1950); Geronimi, Reitherman, Larson, and Clark's *Sleeping Beauty* (1959); Musker and Clements's *The Little Mermaid* (1989); Trousdale and Wise's *Beauty and the Beast* (1991); Musker and Clements's *Aladdin* (1992); Trousdale and Wise's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996).

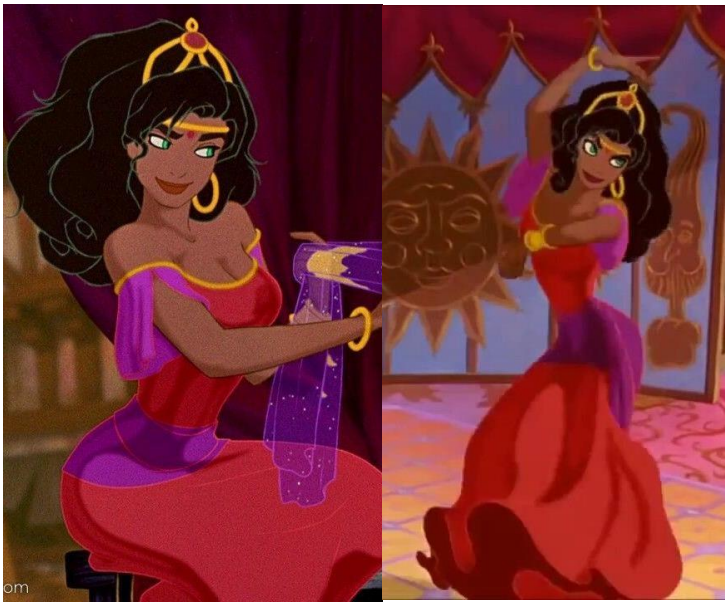
3.1.3: What It Means to Be A Princess of Color

There is, however, a notable difference between the white princesses, and the princesses of color. These princesses of color, to this point in time, included Jasmine from *Aladdin* (1992), Pocahontas from her 1995 self-titled film, and Esmeralda, from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996). These princesses have significantly more revealing clothing (revealing the midriff, for Jasmine and Esmeralda, and the clavicles and shoulders for all three), which few previous princesses had (Ariel, in her mermaid form, does show her midriff, and Aurora and Belle's official princess outfits do feature off-the-shoulder sleeves, though they do not have bear arms almost at all); they tend to have more bare skin as well (Pocahontas's and Esmeralda's outfits reveal their legs, and indeed, their legs are at least partially uncovered for nearly the entire film each); and their clothing seems more inclined towards a malfunction than other princesses' (What is keeping Jasmine's top from slipping down when the sleeves are off-the-shoulder? Who else's clothing has as obvious stitching and, resultantly, the visible possibility for a ripped seam on display as Pocahontas's? Which other princess has only her shift covering her breasts, as Esmeralda does?).

Furthermore, in the case of Jasmine and Esmeralda, their characters even have a costume inspired after the Whore of Babylon, a Biblical figure from the book of Revelation whose fame and power across Earth is one facet which heralds the Christian apocalypse, as described in the book (both the costumes and depictions of the Whore of Babylon herself are seen below). The Whore of Babylon is described as a woman, "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (Revelation 17:2, King James edition), who is "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Revelation 17:6), that is, "arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls" and entitled, "Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth" (Revelation 17:4-5). This description solidifies the Whore of Babylon as a figure that is sexually promiscuous and who utilizes her sexuality as a weapon to gain control over even the most powerful of figures (kings, here described), and to create a stupefying effect on men (those made "drunk with the wine of her fornication"). Furthermore, she is seen as areligious, given she is "drunken with the blood of the saints and [...] the martyrs of Jesus", making a mockery of their sacrifices and their significance to the Christian faith by consuming the very blood they spilled in defense of and deference to that faith.







Pictured above: Jasmine, from Musker and Clements's *Aladdin* (1992), in her Whore of Babylon costume, in the top row. In the middle row, two artistic renderings of the Whore of Babylon as described in the Book of Revelation in the Christian Bible, the left being Luther et al. (1584)'s and the right being Fandom (2023)'s. In the bottom row, Esmeralda, from Trousdale and Wise's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), in her Whore of Babylon costume.

It is noteworthy that both Jasmine and Esmeralda are in versions of the Whore of Babylon outfit which resemble the cut of their normal clothing in their films, which is to say, they show more skin (both of their shoulders, as well as Jasmine's midriff) than the actual Whore of Babylon's traditional depiction, as seen in the images above. They are also in these outfits for specific purposes, both related to the male villains of the film: Jasmine, being dressed this way by the villain Jafar when he assumes power, and Esmeralda, wearing this for her Feast of Fools performance, where she largely interacts with the film's villain, Frollo. This proximity to the male antagonists of the film, in a highly sexualized outfit with religious symbolism that is also related to sexual promiscuity, adds an overtly sexual element to these outfits and, by extension, the princesses of color wearing them. The princesses are clearly seen to have a sexual appeal to the villains, and each weaponizes their sexuality in attempts to stupefy the villains (at least momentarily), as the Whore of Babylon is noted for doing in Revelation: Jasmine distracts Jafar by pretending to show physical interest in him, and Esmeralda sits in Frollo's lap and feigns as if to kiss him before dancing away as a form of mockery common to the Feast of Fools festival.

The overt sexualization of these princesses of color denotes a less "pure" image being attributed to this type of Disney princess. Prior Disney princesses had almost no element of sexuality, as seen in the "Classic Era" princesses (Snow White, Cinderella, and Aurora), who had even minimal screen time with their romantic counterparts, and no male villains who would potentially sexualize them, while the other Renaissance Era princesses were also largely absent a male villain as well (Belle being the exception, though there is still comparatively little said or done to indicate a more lustful conception of her by Gaston), and the increased screen time with their partners was strictly utilized for romantic rather than sexual tensions and developments. Princesses of color, by contrast, will have sexual undertones attributed to them by the villain, and - by extension - the viewer, and are shown to embrace this sexualization (at least to the extent needed to deceive and/or unbalance their adversary). This conversion of the

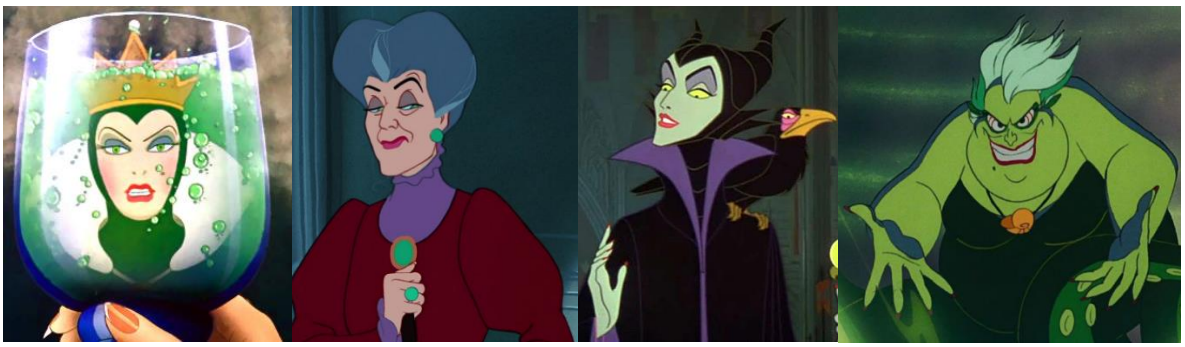
princess of color's body and seductive potential into a tool against a villain is thus another method of subjecting her to the male gaze, while also being used to demonstrate the fallibility of a man ruled by his lustful imaginings of the heroine.

In addition to the sexual overtones apparent in being a princess of color, there are additional facets of racialization which must be contended with. The directors, Trousdale and Wise, in their 1997 commentary shared how they conceived of Esmeralda's voice as being "rougher" than the typical Disney heroine, "less clear" than previous princesses, to sound as though she "has been around" while still being "tender" and "strong", finding this in Demi Moore's speaking voice and in the "smoky quality" of Heidi Mollenhauer's singing voice for Esmeralda. While this description also has clear sexual undertones as well (particularly in the concept of a woman who "has been around" and has a "rough" voice), the element of racialization is clear, especially when juxtaposed against the previous (white) Disney princesses, whose voices are considered to be "clear" and who can focus on their tenderness without also needing to emphasize their street smarts. It is not uncommon for people - especially women - of color to be associated with roughness and more worldly appearances or voices (see: hooks (1992), West (1995), Wingfield and Mills (2012), and Adams-Bass, Stevenson, & Kotzin (2014)), and the draw on this racial imagining is made evident by the directors' comments.

3.1.4: Evil Is as Evil… Looks?

The final critical component to Esmeralda's initial appearance on screen can be found in her eyes. Apart from Quasimodo, who appeared on screen only moments before her (and whose eyes are still paler in color compared to hers), Esmeralda is the first hero(ine) to be associated with the color green in a Disney animated feature. Prior to this, green was often the color of villainy and evil magic in Disney films, and characters with green eyes (or skin, or magical aura) were often the main antagonist of prior films. Such examples (pictured below) include Ursula from John Musker and Ron Clements's *The Little Mermaid* (1989), Lady Tremaine from Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske, and Clyde Geronimi's *Cinderella* (1950), Maleficent from Clyde Geronimi, Wolfgang Reitherman, Eric Larson, and Les Clark's *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), and The Evil Queen from David Hand, Perce Pearce, William Cottrell, Larry Morey, Wilfred Jackson, and Ben Sharpsteen's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), among others. Up to this point in Disney animated film, the color green had been largely associated with female antagonists (notable exception being Scar, from Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff's *The Lion King* (1994)), who tended to have a fixation on beauty, social

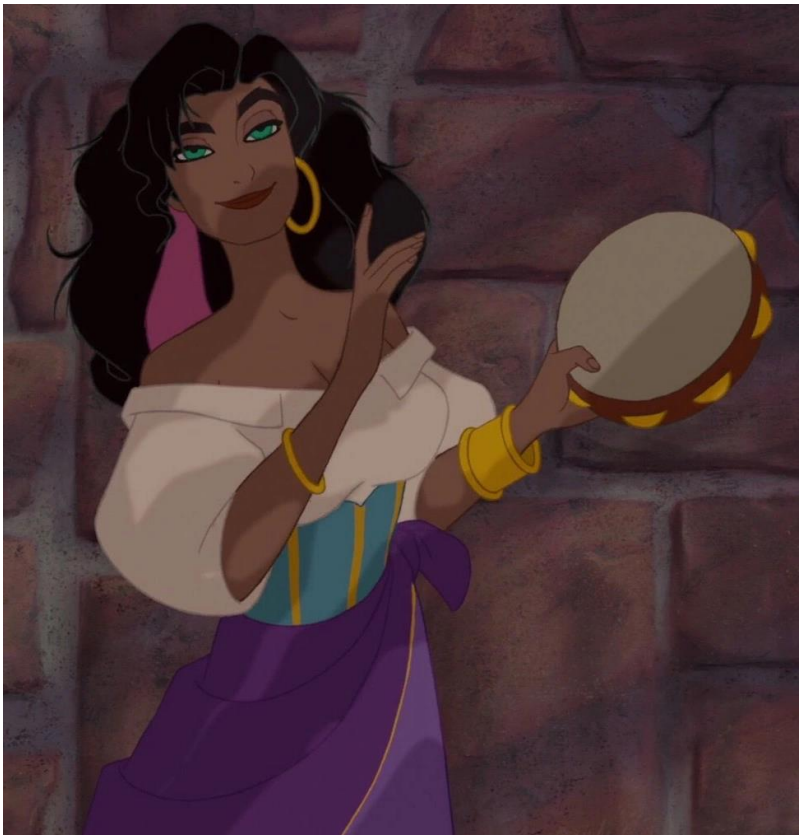
prospects, and political power (as seen in the four selected female villains mentioned above, all of whom are shown to spend at least some portion of their screen time focused on their looks - exception of Maleficent, who still appears exceptionally well-put-together - and their sociopolitical positioning - exception to The Evil Queen, who is already queen). This had created an association between the "right" kind of femininity - largely embodied by the princesses, who were not power-hungry, and who were conceived of as naturally beautiful - and the "wrong" kind of femininity - conceived of in the villainess, who was likely not conventionally attractive or if she was she had spent considerable time trying to achieve this appearance, and who worked in malicious ways to maintain and/or improve their beauty and sociopolitical standing.



Depicted, from left to right: The Evil Queen from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), directed by David Hand, Perce Pearce, William Cottrell, Larry Morey, Wilfred Jackson, and Ben Sharpsteen; Lady Tremaine from *Cinderella* (1950), directed by Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske, and Clyde Geronimi; Maleficent from *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), directed by Clyde Geronimi, Wolfgang Reitherman, Eric Larson, and Les Clark; and Ursula from *The Little Mermaid* (1989), directed by John Musker and Ron Clements.

This history of beautiful, malevolent, power-crazed, green women is therefore what the audience is meant to first think of when noticing that Esmeralda has bright green eyes. Combined with the shadows she is standing in, and the smirk on her face (which is more likely meant to convey her acknowledgement of Phoebus's gaze, as described in the above section), she seems to mirror these villainesses of Disney past (as seen below). The fact that her name (Esmeralda) is a further reference to this color, only seems to reinforce this assumption. Thus, the audience is made to rely upon stereotypes of green-eyed villains as they cast their assumptions about Esmeralda based on her initial appearance in the film; in this manner, the viewer is placed slightly closer to Frollo, the true villain of the film, whose blanket belief that all Roma - especially women - are not to be trusted, and are sinful criminals. It is through the

course of the film, however, that the audience realizes how wrong this assumption truly is, while Frollo continues to crack down on the Romani population and Esmeralda in particular.



Esmeralda, from Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996).

3.2: Alliance with the Virgin Mary

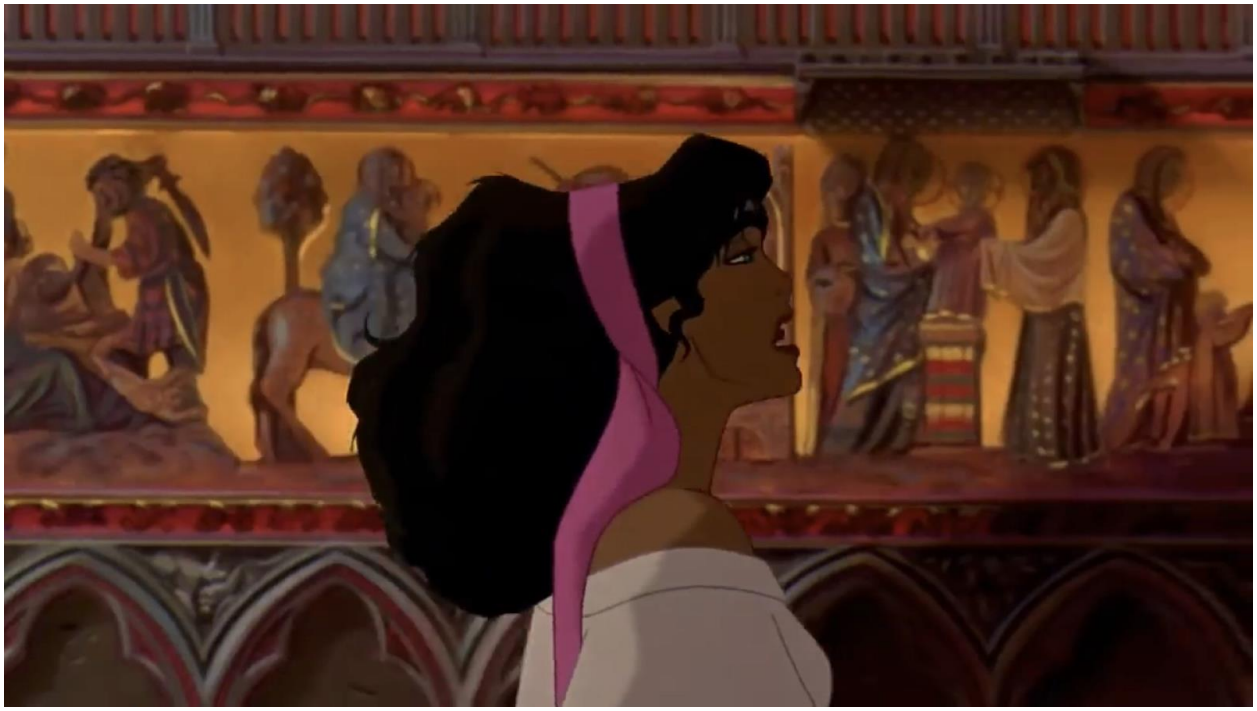
As discussed in the section 2.1.3, Notre Dame is treated as its own character, and due to the patron of the cathedral being the Virgin Mary, the cathedral as a building and as a character within the film can be seen as an extension of the Virgin. So while Mary is shown to begin taking of note of Frollo and his actions against the Roma at the opening of the film, this was not the last time which she interacted with him, nor was Quasimodo's mother the only Romani woman who Mary sought to protect and ally herself with, and as the film has moved to the main story, Mary's protection and allyship can be seen to shift to Esmeralda, who also happens to be Frollo's next target.

3.2.1: The Outcasts: A Shared Identity

The connection between the Virgin Mary and Esmeralda is solidified early in the film, during Esmeralda's song, "God Help the Outcasts". After the Feast of Fools, Quasimodo's

torment, Esmeralda's assistance of him and subsequent escape from the guards, Frollo's assault of her in the cathedral, and her essential imprisonment inside its walls as she seeks sanctuary, Esmeralda is frustratedly venting to the Archdeacon about how Quasimodo was treated, and the lack of support among the Parisians in standing up to Frollo. The Archdeacon calmly replies that, "You can't right all the wrongs in this world by yourself", and Esmeralda - still frustrated - exclaims that, "No one out there's going to help, that's for sure", to which the Archdeacon only says, "Well, perhaps there's someone in here who can", before leaving Esmeralda to reflect on their conversation. The Archdeacon's words - particularly, his insistence that Esmeralda cannot "right all the wrongs in this world" alone, and that, when those outside will not help, "perhaps there is someone in here" who will instead, reflect the need for an ally in Esmeralda's fight for justice, and the possibility that such an ally could come from inside the church. Specifically, the Archdeacon refers to the "someone" who could help, before the camera cuts to a scene of Parisians kneeling in prayer on the benches of the cathedral, indicating that this helper will be the one who receives the prayers of those in the cathedral - alluding to God, or, more specifically, the Virgin Mary, who often works as an intermediary between Catholics and God in matters of prayer.

Further clarifying that it is Mary to whom Esmeralda turns in prayer, she is seen to walk towards a statue of the Virgin as the opening instrumentation of her song, "God Help the Outcasts", begins. The strings and woodwind which begin the instrumentation strike a contemplative tone, as the camera switches between Esmeralda's face and Mary's, and Esmeralda shares with the statue, "Yes, I know I'm just an outcast / I shouldn't speak to you / Still I see your face and wonder / were you once an outcast too?" By asking this question, Esmeralda begins to establish a two-way connection between herself and Mary, drawing on commonalities of what it means to be persecuted by social and political forces greater than one's self, which both women of color were subjected to in their lives. While the persecution of Esmeralda has been established already in the film, the audience is reminded of the persecution which Mary faced as the mother of Jesus when Esmeralda is seen to walk passed a depiction of the Massacre of the Holy Innocents (as confirmed by the directors in their 1997 DVD commentary of the film), a Biblical story from Matthew 2:16 which tells of King Herod's command to kill all Jewish boys under the age of two in and near Bethlehem (where Jesus was born), in an attempt to kill Jesus. This became the reason that the Holy Family fled to Egypt, and began their life of persecution by political powers that sought to kill or otherwise subjugate and control Jesus and, by extension, His family.



Esmeralda walking passed a depiction of The Massacre of the Holy Innocents during her song, “God Help the Outcasts”, in Notre Dame cathedral (Trousdale and Wise 1996).

When Esmeralda appeals for divine aid for “[her] people”, who she identifies as “the poor and downtrod”, she is then walking passed the depiction of the Massacre of the Holy Innocents. This further cements a connection between Esmeralda’s people - the Roma, the “poor and downtrod” of Paris at the time - and Mary’s people - then Jews, now Christians, represented in the Holy Innocents who lose their lives in the scene behind Esmeralda. Esmeralda’s song culminates in her asking, “I thought we all were the children of God?” This question in particular - asked to Mary, who was the Mother of God (in the form of Jesus, who is the Son portion of the Holy Trinity comprised of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) - appeals to the status of Mary as a mother to all, as God is meant to be Creator of all, as well. This sympathetic, semi-helpless, semi-hopeful question - is asked as Esmeralda stands in the light of the rose window, which is meant to represent Godliness to churchgoers inside. The camera is angled as though looking down on Esmeralda from above, with a shot that is slowly widening away from her, as though her prayer is drifting towards the Heaven, being carried by both her song and the light of the window - a collaboration between herself and the Virgin Mary, to draw attention to the plight of the Roma in Paris.

3.2.2: "Hellfire" and Divine Interventions

Judge Clause Frollo is shown throughout the film to be a hypocritical man who values his own power and sense of right and wrong over others' versions of these concepts. This extends to his Catholic faith, where he repeatedly states that he is devout and virtuous, then acts counter to this claim. Specifically, in his song, "Hellfire", what begins as a prayer to the Virgin Mary, demanding that she tell him why he is fixated on Esmeralda, evolves into a justification for his sinful thoughts of her in which he shifts the blame onto Esmeralda - rather than himself - and denies his own guilt and wrongdoing, painting himself as the victim of Esmeralda in need of Mary's saving. Specifically, Frollo sings, "Protect me, Maria! / Don't let this siren cast her spell / Don't let her fire sear my flesh and bone / Destroy Esmeralda / And let her taste the fires of hell / Or else let her be mine and mine alone!" (49:53-50:10). The association of Esmeralda with a siren - a mythical creature capable of luring men to their deaths through promises of what they most desire, until the man would jump overboard or shipwreck, and ultimately drown: blinded by their desperate want to the point of fatal distraction and reckless behavior - is especially compelling imagery for how Frollo views his supposed victimhood at the hands of Esmeralda, when it is truly his own lust for her that will doom him.

His blaming of Esmeralda, and seeking to either kill her ("Destroy Esmeralda / And let her tastes the fires of hell") or possess her selfishly and wholly ("Or else let her be mine and mine alone"), culminates ultimately in his turn from seeking divine aid to embracing his lust for Esmeralda and committing himself to either owning her, or eliminating her. This transition, however, is accompanied by multiple points when he could have stopped himself from slipping deeper into his obsession with Esmeralda, seen in the form of divine intervention. The first and most persistent of this is the chanting of a confessional prayer, led by the Archdeacon in Notre Dame (including a reference to confessing to Mary directly: "Beatae Mariae semper Virgini" (47:52-47:58)), which marks the transition into Frollo's song. However, he quickly loses control over himself, demonstrating how he struggles with his emotions as the song increases in volume and tempo to match the shift in his lyrics. The chant continues to intersperse through Frollo's opening of the song, as he increasingly fixates on his thoughts of Esmeralda and rejects the confessional's pull towards recognizing the harm of his beliefs and intended actions.

As he ignores this appeal to admit his wrong-doings and seek penance or another form of repentance - as is the focus of a confession in the Catholic Church - the divine intervention shifts with the appearance of his subconscious in the form of a choir of hooded figures, which attempt to point out Frollo's own complicity in his sexualization of Esmeralda (chanting "mea

culpa" and "mea maxima culpa", meaning "through my (greatest) fault", originating in a Catholic confessional prayer, as well as finding a basis in legal terms (editors of Merriam-Webster 2023)). Yet Frollo denies his own wrong-doing still, and only further places blame at Esmeralda's feet, frantically exclaiming in between the hooded figures' chanting that, "It's not my fault! / I'm not to blame! / It is the gypsy girl / The witch who sent this flame! / It's not my fault / If, in God's plan / He made the devil so much stronger than a man!" (49:28-49:49). These lines are delivered as the camera cuts in between shots of Frollo's tormented expression and the hooded figures, as he attempts to outrun their accusations while defending himself, as if he is on trial for his sins against Esmeralda. His unwillingness to confront himself is solidified in his furthering of associations between Esmeralda and evil, here in connections to witchcraft and the devil, along with the hellfire and sinning itself ("this flame" referring both to the literal flames of hell, which increasingly light the room in shades of red, as well as the allusions to the "burning desire" which his thoughts of Esmeralda has awoken in him, mentally and physically).

When he refuses to grapple with his own complicity still, and coming right after his most vicious declaration yet of "Destroy Esmeralda / And let her taste the fires of hell / Or else let her be mine and mine alone", the most blatant form of divine intervention arrives in the guard who interrupts Frollo's song. Backlit by white light that dominates the center of the screen and cuts through the darkness of Frollo's room, face obscured in the resultant shadow and figure made somewhat fuzzy and indistinct, a guard informs Frollo in a soft but firm tone that, "[T]he gypsy has escaped. [...] She's nowhere in the cathedral. She's gone" (50:12-50:18). Here is a chance for Frollo to be done with Esmeralda, free of the so-called "spell" which she has supposedly cast on him, and not pursue her further now that she has escaped. While Frollo cannot undo the damage which he has already done to Esmeralda, and the other Roma within the film, this divinely-sanctioned messenger offers a final intervention, the opportunity to walk away from the lust which has been tormenting him, and to forget about Esmeralda altogether.

Yet Frollo's decision is broadcasted already to the audience: while the guard stands bathed in holy light, with the door still open offering a chance for Frollo to take even one step towards this chance at redemption and a reduction in the harm he has caused, Frollo is carefully shown only in single shots of him illuminated by the hellfire in his fireplace. He does not attempt to move towards the light - literally or metaphorically - and when he rejects this last attempt at steering him away from a path that will only further alienate him from a more just relationship with Esmeralda - and, by extension, Mary, as both Esmeralda's ally and as a divine figure for justice, peace, and protection - the audience is not surprised. Frollo instead commits

himself to his path by stating, “Get out, you idiot! I'll find her. I'll find her if I have to burn down all of Paris!” (50:22-50:28). No longer relying on divine assistance, Frollo chooses instead to address the hellfire itself as the darkness of the scene is physically manifested in the removal of the light which the guard had brought in with him from outside, and the heightening of the flames which cast a deeper red glow around the room. This symbolism of his dedication to possessing or destroying Esmeralda, whatever it takes, manifests as the song resumes its instrumentation, and intensifies to the end as Frollo declares that, “She will be mine / Or she will burn!” (51:01-51:22), utilizing both a crescendo and ritardando until Frollo’s sustain of the last note. This combination of elements asserts the gravity of Frollo’s decision to turn away from Mary’s attempts at divine intervention during his prayer to her, and the absence of all light as Frollo collapses at the end of his song is the symbolic closing of the door on any possible redemption arc for this character.

3.2.3: When All Else Fails: Divine Punishment

Upon arrival at the climax of the film, Frollo is poised to kill Esmeralda, declaring, “And he shall smite the wicked and plunge them into the fiery pit!” (1:21:19-1:21:26), as he raises a sword above his head, poised to strike Esmeralda as she holds onto Quasimodo to prevent him from falling to his death. As he stands over Esmeralda, Frollo is once more backlit by the flames of hell (as he was in “Hellfire”), now with his eyes noticeably reddened by the flames burning inside and out, and his hair tufted so as to almost resemble horns atop his head, his final demonic appearance after he has been in steady visual decline since his rejection of the divine intervention in “Hellfire”. This visual of Frollo demonstrates physically the toll which his pursuit of Esmeralda has taken on him, and serves as an outward reflection of the sin within him that is centered on how he feels about Esmeralda. This transformation through the film has brought Frollo closer and closer to hell, as he has further sexualized and racialized Esmeralda in his thoughts and actions, and tirelessly hunted for her, to the destruction of Paris and now almost Esmeralda as well.

Yet, Mary intervenes. As Frollo shows that he has truly learned nothing in the course of the film’s passage of time, and is prepared to kill another defenseless Romani woman who only seeks to protect and defend Quasimodo, the gargoyle which Frollo is standing on comes to life. Roaring at him and baring its fangs, with fire glowing in its narrowed eyes and snarling mouth - a clear depiction of vengeance about to be delivered - the gargoyle breaks off from the wall, and descends into the fires of hell waiting to engulf Frollo at the bottom of Notre Dame.

A clear verdict is delivered: Frollo's campaign of violence, particularly against Romani women, has been ended.

This scene - with Frollo prepared to kill a Romani woman who seeks only to help someone in a more perilous position than herself - calls the audience back to the Romani woman that Notre Dame (the cathedral, which did not open its doors) and Notre Dame (Mary, mother to all and defender of the defenseless, who did not bring intervention in time) did not manage to save. The similar camera angle - looking up at Frollo, from his would-be victim's perspective, cutting between Esmeralda's terrified face and Frollo's determination (and genuine delight, in this case) to achieve his goal despite (or actually because of) harm it may cause - aids in this recollection of the similar position which Quasimodo's mother faced at the start of the film. Yet, after witnessing the ways in which Mary had been unable to be a true place of sanctuary for Quasimodo's mother - the doors failing to open in time; the Archdeacon arriving too late; Frollo's murder of her and attempted murder of Quasimodo; the Archdeacon placing Quasimodo into Frollo's care to be neglected, manipulated, and abused for the next two decades of his life - the audience sees Mary intervene here quite decisively. The animation of the gargoyle, Frollo's condemnation to hell, and the relief which is then brought to the heroes of the story as the resolution is reached, all showcase how Mary does not miss the mark this time in her aid of Romani women.

Esmeralda's life is saved, and she is rewarded for having faith and believing in Mary and the possibilities of hope that she represented (as demonstrated in "God Help the Outcasts"). Not only is Esmeralda alive at the end of the film, she is also hand-in-hand with Phoebus in front of the cathedral, arms raised to the cheers of the Parisians. In this manner, Esmeralda is the answer to her own prayer, with some assistance from Mary offered in the form of a source of strength to draw from, and an ally to rely on when all seems like it may soon be lost. Esmeralda's actions and choices, guided by the hope and courage which her alliance with the Virgin Mary was able to provide when she needed it the most, led to the rallying of the Roma and non-Roma Parisians into standing with Esmeralda against Frollo - the very thing which she had frustratedly told the Archdeacon she could not count on them to do, right before "God Help the Outcasts". Not only this, but in the freeing of the Roma from their cages and the fighting side-by-side of Roma and non-Roma at the climax, the first steps towards social acceptance of Esmeralda and her people are shown at the finale of the film.

3.3: Virtues, Vices, and Foiling Frollo

Throughout the film, Esmeralda and Frollo are shown in constant conflict with one another, with Esmeralda placed in rising danger by his interest in - and disgust with - her. In many ways, due to no personal connection to the man (as Quasimodo has), Esmeralda serves as clearer opposition to Frollo and his ideas and actions than the main character. Here, her position as deuteragonist (the secondary main character) permits for a rich example of foiling (contrasting with, within the narrative) Frollo. This is articulated especially in their oppositional manifestations of Catholic spiritual expressions (the seven capital virtues for Esmeralda, and the seven capital vices for Frollo), and in their conflicting worldviews which compete to influence Quasimodo, as the main character.

3.3.1: Esmeralda's Virtues

The seven capital virtues - in the order in which they will be discussed - are Patience, Diligence, Humility, Charity, Temperance, Kindness, and Chastity. Virtue and vice have been written on extensively, especially in theology and art discursive history; for their theological conception, I draw primarily from Father Dominic Prummer's *Handbook of Moral Theology* (as translated by Reverend Gerald Shelton, 1957/2017), for historical contextualization I referenced Kimminich (1991), and for their manifestations in art, Shawn Tucker's *The Virtues and Vices in the Arts: A Sourcebook* (2015) serves as my base.

Perhaps first and foremost, it is clear from her actions throughout the film that Esmerelda has long exhibited Patience. Within a religious context, the virtue of Patience refers to the ability of a person to endure difficult situations and persevere, without falling to the sin of Wrath, which is considered to be anger against innocents, or which is especially long-lasting or punitive, all of which would be considered unjust and thus unholy. Esmerelda clearly has not directed her frustration about social injustices against any misguided targets, nor does she ever lash out unfairly at people in the film. Expressing herself against Frollo, his guards, and the other Parisians' mistreatment of Quasimodo and the Roma is instead a justified and righteous end, as she struggles to correct the unfairness in targeting marginalized people. This type of anger not only has value, but also virtue, and can be seen as a means to ensuring continued Patience as Esmerelda continues to grapple with the effects of other people's Wrath (namely, Frollo's), and keeps herself in check so as to not act against an undeserving target. She is able to rally others to her cause, and contain her frustrations and indignations until it is the proper setting to be dispelled or directed properly.

This perseverance in Patience as she combats social injustices, and her willingness to turn to others for help when needed, also points to her Diligence. Her tireless pursuit of justice, even at great risk to herself, her physical safety, and her peace of mind, shows a work ethic and persistence that is prepared to counter Frollo's countering dedication to harm others in service to himself and his beliefs, and which characterizes this virtue. Her willingness to turn to prayer in "God Help the Outcasts", despite her uncertainties, demonstrates a willingness to attempt new methods to achieve her goal, and is a further demonstration to her work that she will seek new solutions to problems which she has grappled with for a while. Additionally, her street performances, efforts at protecting the Roma and her other friends, abilities to evade capture by Frollo and his men, and obvious knowledge of the inner workings of Paris and its operations which could only be obtained from familiarity born out of perfected repetition, showcase her Diligence throughout all areas of her life.

Upon the beginning of "God Help the Outcasts", it is seen that Esmerelda embraces Humility in her willingness to pray to a God that she is not even sure exists. "I don't know if You can hear me / Or if You're even there / I don't know if You would listen / To a gypsy's prayer" are the opening lines to her solo. These lyrics are accompanied by a beat of rest at the beginning of her singing, to emphasize her voice alone, and then soft strings that compliment her questioning, hesitant beginning of prayer. She clearly demonstrates a lack of preoccupation with herself - a defining component to Humility - which is encased not in a demand for attention based on her supposed deservedness of divine attention (as Frollo does in his solo "Hellfire", which is also a prayer), but on her possible undeservedness. Her low estimation of how Mary (whom she is praying to) may view Romani prayers ("I don't know if you would listen / To a gypsy's prayer") also clearly shows there is no vanity or Pride (Humility's oppositional sin) in her approach to the task.

In the film, Esmeralda is clearly presented to be most concerned with the treatment of other people, rather than the treatment of herself specifically - a hallmark to Charity, which seeks to help others and share what one has with those less fortunate. In her solo, rather than praying for herself, she prays for others - those "less lucky than I", as she says. This comes right after personally being victimized, harassed, and trapped by Frollo and his guards, when the threat of death was made against her only moments before. Yet her love and care for those with less than her leads Esmeralda not to ask for greater security or protection for herself, but rather those she views as more in need and without a voice to advocate for themselves. Not only is she not greedy in her demands for herself (Greed being the opposite to Charity), she indeed neglects to mention anything she would like to personally gain, materially or socially,

altogether. When juxtaposed with the non-Romani that are praying for "wealth", "fame" and "glory to shine on my name", Esmerelda's lack of care towards what she could pray for in self-gain is even more noticeable.

After the other churchgoing Parisians finish singing, Esmeralda reaffirms, "I ask for nothing / I can get by", driving home her focus on not only other people in an act of Charity, but also her commitment to the virtue of Temperance. She is content with just "getting by", and rejects the option to expand upon what she already has, or to overindulge (which would be an act of Gluttony, Temperance's opposite). When presented with anything that she could pray for, Esmerelda does not struggle with moderating her own pleasure or desire, as the other Parisians do, nor does she want to splurge on further material possessions or comforts, which she does not possess much of to begin with. Instead, her self-restraint is clear through her willingness to live simply with what she already has, a true testament of Temperance.

Esmeralda's consideration of others shows a truly selfless generosity, and an authentic concern for others, behaviors which are given to the embodiment of Kindness. This is apparent throughout the film in her friendship with Quasimodo and her developing relationship with Phoebus, as well as her aid to both of them at different points. She does this out of the kindness of her heart, due to the bonds they share with one another, and she is seen to begrudge her friends and chosen family nothing. These are actions which she does - in a scenario where she can reap no reward nor recognition - due to Kindness being an integral part of who she is, as much as her empathy and sense of justice are, which go hand-in-hand with her manifestations of this virtue.

Chastity - conceived of largely in the sexual sense of refraining from certain, or all, sexual acts - is evident in Esmeralda's denial of Frollo's advancements, and her obvious revulsion with his Lust (Chastity's opposite) for her, which fits into the traditional conception of the seven capital virtues and seven capital sins as being in battle with one another for a person's soul (Kimminich 1991). In this sense, Esmerelda clearly calling out Frollo for feeling Lust towards her ("I know what you were doing") and the certainty of her rejection of and disgust towards him and his Lust towards her demonstrate a triumph of virtue over vice. Chastity is additionally evident, though, in her newly minted romantic connection to Phoebus and her platonic-but-perceived-romantic connection to Quasimodo, which do not involve sexual overtures in the film. Even when dressed as the Whore of Babylon, when dancing for a (mostly male) audience in a sexualized routine, when flirting with male characters, or when bantering with Phoebus, it is clear that this is but a facet of Esmeralda's personality, one which she dons in public performance to convert her sexuality into a weapon for her own defense (as

discussed in section 3.1.3). This is not a true reflection of her character, seen in scenes where she is often alone or with a character whom she trusts (such as Quasimodo or Phoebus, later in the film); in those moments, she is able to be a more genuine reflection of herself, which notably does not include the same reliance on her weaponized sexual appeal.

3.3.2: Frollo's Vices

In direct contrast to Esmeralda's virtues, Frollo foils her - as the two's actions, beliefs, and attitudes often foil each other throughout the film - in his embodiment of the seven capital sins. The seven capital sins - in order, mirroring that of Esmeralda's Virtues section - are Wrath (opposite Patience), Sloth (opposite Diligence), Pride (opposite Humility), Avarice (opposite Charity), Gluttony (opposite Temperance), Envy (opposite Kindness), and Lust (opposite Chastity).

During the film, Frollo's anger is a force to contend with. He displays Wrath in heightened proportions, however, in the Paris is Burning sequence. Given it directly follows his dedication at the end of "Hellfire" to have Esmeralda, no matter the cost, Frollo is willing to go to extreme lengths in order to obtain her. Throughout this sequence, he is shown to deliver harsher and swifter punishments as those he questions about Esmeralda fail to provide him with the information that he wants. The sequence is composed of a series of scenes with moving camera shots, to highlight such actions as uncovering a trapdoor or pushing a caravan in the river, interspersed with short cuts that feature close-ups of individual actions, such as Frollo's hand closing around silver coins he is using as a bribe for information. This style of filming permits a montage of images that demonstrate the progression of Frollo's actions against Parisians. This is accompanied by foreboding low brass instrumentation and a dark, gloomy palette, which precedes the final escalation of Frollo's rage against Paris, as he places the miller and his family under house arrest and then lights their home on fire with them inside. At this scene, the screen erupts into the red glow of the fire, harkening back to the hellfire which the previous sequence so focused on, but also underlining the Wrath that Frollo is unleashing on the city as he attempts to locate Esmeralda. When compared to Esmeralda's careful maintenance of her own frustrations at the injustices orchestrated by Frollo, and her doling out of negative emotions only towards the perpetrators of unjust treatment, Frollo's unchecked retaliation against an entire city seems even more drastic.

Additionally, when examined against Esmeralda's Diligence - her reliance on herself and her own capabilities and work ethic - Frollo's Sloth, manifested in his reliance on his guards to do the overwhelming majority of his work for him, is striking. In nearly every

interaction which he has with Esmeralda, Frollo directs others to perform the physical labor of containing her for him, such as at the Feast of Fools, in the Court of Miracles, and at the siege of Notre Dame. This even includes in Paris is Burning, when only a few minutes prior, Frollo had said to the guard who interrupted "Hellfire" that he, himself, would be the one to find Esmeralda. When Frollo is seen to do the physical work of capturing Esmeralda, he typically only steps in after someone else has already cornered her, or he believes her otherwise unable to escape him, such as in the cathedral after the Feast of Fools, or when he pushes his way into Notre Dame - after his men did nearly all the work of breaking down the door for him - believing Esmeralda to be already dead when he reaches her. Frollo is unconcerned with accomplishing things for himself, and instead sees his position of power over others as a means to evade having to exert himself in any way.

In perhaps the bluntest reveal of one of his sins, Frollo informs Mary at the beginning of "Hellfire" that he is a proud man - ironically, it is his supposed virtue that he is proud of, in this instance. His unwillingness to accept any possible blame in his song, and his desire to view himself as a victim of Esmeralda's sorcery, further show that he is too proud to acknowledge that he may be fallible like others. Yet his Pride is also communicated in his utter lack of Humility, guilt, or shame for any extended period of time or contention in the film. For Feast of Fools - a day dedicated to mockery of social norms - Frollo verbally expresses disgust and disdain with the "peasant festival" to both Quasimodo and Phoebus (20:42), and when he is the subject of the mockery, he is incapable of laughing along with the other Parisians at himself. This dedication to his own image, and the total unwillingness to permit himself to be the subject of light-hearted joking, demonstrates his prioritization of himself above all else, especially above the happiness and comfort of others. When compared to the lack of self-preoccupation that Esmeralda shows in "God Help the Outcasts", Frollo's Pride in "Hellfire" and at the Feast of Fools is particularly noticeable.

Frollo's Avarice for Esmeralda is especially clear in his desire to increase his hold over her until he possesses a monopoly on her - mind, body, and soul. He first begins expressing this idea of owning her completely in the cathedral after the Feast of Fools, where his lust begins to show to Esmeralda, and he tells her before he leaves: "Set one foot outside, and you're mine!" (34:40-34:44). Throughout "Hellfire", he makes four additional references to wanting Esmeralda to be his, and "[his] alone" (50:08-50:11), and if he cannot have her, then he prays for her destruction. His unwillingness to share Esmeralda in her public performances - or even in her ability to maintain free movement, thought, and action from him - showcases a selfish desire to hoard her away for himself. It also showcases how Frollo has depersonalized

Esmeralda, viewing her now as merely an objection for him to own and control, and - most importantly - keep solely for himself and his own enjoyment of her.

Not only does Frollo seek to not share Esmeralda with the rest of the world, he will also be content with nothing less than all of her, at all times, however, wherever, whenever he wants to possess her. This demonstrates a complete lack of moderation (which defines Temperance, the opposing virtue to Gluttony) on his part, for her performances and her person, viewing the ownership of her as a status symbol in their personal battle of wills and in his public battle of crushing the Roma. Frollo is unwilling to ration himself to only seeing her rarely in public, where she is out of his ability to consume her as much and as often as he wants, and he will not even entertain the notion of avoiding Esmeralda altogether, as seen in his rejection of divine intervention meant to direct him away from her.

Furthermore, when Frollo believes that someone else has the attention from Esmeralda which he wants - such as with Quasimodo after the Paris is Burning scene, where he discovers Quasimodo's carving of Esmeralda and confronts his charge with the knowledge of the friendship he shares with Esmeralda - he is shown to fall victim to Envy. Lacking any kind of positive interaction with Esmeralda himself, he wishes to take Esmeralda from Quasimodo - either to have her as his own, or simply to prevent Quasimodo from continuing to have a relationship with her when Frollo himself does not. He is unable to extend any form of Kindness towards Quasimodo, finding no happiness in his adoptive son's joy if it comes from what Frollo perceives as his own loss. Frollo's burning of the carving, casting it to the floor in front of Quasimodo where it continues to be consumed by the flame, is a cruel reflection of what Frollo intends to do with Esmeralda, if she will not have him, though here it is performed solely for Quasimodo's benefit. The message is clear, though Frollo says it anyway: "I will free you from her evil spell. She will torment you no longer" (1:03:56-1:04:06). Singling out Quasimodo by his words and through his actions reinforces the jealousy which Frollo feels over his connection with Esmeralda, and the scene displays vividly that Frollo will not tolerate Quasimodo having what he wants.

Last but certainly not least, Frollo showcases his Lust for Esmeralda throughout the film. Where Esmeralda only utilizes her sexuality as a shield and a weapon in self-defense, absent any sexual tensions felt on her part, she nonetheless is the inspiration for a large amount of the sentiment in Frollo. From gaping open-mouthed at her dance in the Feast of Fools, to smelling her hair and pressing himself against her in the cathedral, to nearly every line of "Hellfire" - with all its metaphors about Lust being a fire that Frollo cannot control, as sin, like hellfire, is unmanageable once given free reign - Frollo's most clearly reiterated capital vice is

Lusting after Esmeralda during the film. Her obvious disinterest in - and, indeed, open disgust of - Frollo does nothing to diminish this feeling for him; if anything, her repeated refusals throughout the story seem to spur on his desire for her all the more, wanting most that which is repulsed by him, finding delight in the horror which he invokes in a Romani woman, the embodiment of so much of what Frollo dedicates his life to the destruction of.

Conclusion

The Romani women in Walt Disney Pictures' 1996 film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* are defined by their race and gender above all else, racialized and sexualized by a (predominantly white, male, heterosexual) creative team as part of the storyline and also as part of seemingly wider failures to challenge stereotypical conceptions of this community, many of which have carried over from Victor Hugo's depiction of Romani women in his novel. Some of these depictions - namely in the case of Esmeralda - were contested by deeper character development, connections to a (mainly religious) moral authority, and wider contestations with (some of) the racialized and sexualized archetypes which women of color may be viewed as by those in proximity to them. However, richer characterization - which complicates the gendered and raced roles which women of color are often seen to embody and/or are forced to adopt - and more varied depictions - to demonstrate the complex lives of these women, and the various forms these lives could take - are required to have a representation of Romani women that is more balanced and comprehensive.

It is possible to begin employing such a lens to the presentations of Romani women in wider *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* franchising put forth by The Walt Disney Company. The franchise currently includes a sequel to the original film, with plans for a live action remake in the unspecified future, as well as various VHS and DVD releases with accompanying features (though now rendered arguably obsolete with the development of technology, and the launch of streaming services which find their Disney embodiment in Disney+). And beyond films and their versions, the franchise additionally includes *The Hunchback of Notre Dame: An Original Walt Disney Records Soundtrack* (the soundtrack to the film), and a U.S. and European version of a Walt Disney Theatrical play adaptation of the film (though more heavily reliant on Hugo's original source material than the film), with a studio cast recording made for each version as well (the European version being in German, given the production was written for and premiered in Berlin, Germany). There is various merchandise associated with the film and its characters, such as children's books, toys, costumes, accessories, comic books, magazines, computer and videogames, and more, often marketed in the beginning with the aid of corporate partners such as Burger King, Payless Shoes, Nestle, and Mattel, among a few others. Furthermore, the characters make occasional appearances in the Disney theme parks around the world (though most often in the Paris park, due to the setting of the film), where they engage

in meet-and-greets with park guests, parades, performances, and marketing. The characters have also been used in broader Disney branding and advertising, and have been included in further Disney franchises as well, such as Quasimodo and Esmeralda's appearance in Walt Disney Television's *House of Mouse*, and Esmeralda's use in the launch of the official Disney Princesses lineup in 2004 (and though she was removed after a short period of time, she is sometimes still included as the princesses' friend or an unofficial member of the lineup).

Understanding how Esmeralda - and other Romani women of the film - are presented in this broader franchising of their film would enable a more detailed comparative perspective across the varying iterations of these women as the products have been designed, created, and marketed across the years. The franchise can also serve as a place of intervention, through which The Walt Disney Company could - at any point - choose to adapt the representations of Romani women which they crafted for the film. Particularly in the use of remaking animated films into live action ones, the company has already demonstrated a willingness to reimagine their previous films, often in noteworthy ways such as character redesigns, more in-depth characterization, altered plotlines, additional and removal of characters, et cetera.

Therefore, the upcoming live action remake of the 1996 film offers an opportunity for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* to be done with more complexity given to the Romani women. The film could be a place for deeper engagement with and refutation of stereotypes associated with the Roma, and could utilize a more feminist approach to the film's character developments and plot. Perhaps most importantly, this is an opportunity for the creative team to - this time - engage female Romani creators in the process of making the film. From initial design to final cut, having the ability to shape representations of themselves has been largely denied to Romani women in mainstream film, and not merely in the case of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* adaptations. The ability to self-represent is critical as a first step towards more just depictions of Romani people, and women in particular (see the Film section of the RomArchive, for example, on how self-representation has changed Romani people's depictions in films), and could have a monumental impact on female Romani characters in Disney films. Future research would do well to further examine the role of feminist film critique and Black feminist thought in analyzing not only Disney, children's, and family films, but also wider filmography's representations of Romani women, in order to more fully understand the role of stereotypes, archetypes, and framing devices in informing these representations and impacting the social and political realities of these women.

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