7-19-2024

Queer Coding and Representation: The Motion Picture Production Code and Its Impact on the LGBTQ Community

Amber Leech
Ursinus College, amleech@ursinus.edu

Ursinus College

Queer Coding and Representation:
The Motion Picture Production Code and Its Impact on the LGBTQ Community

Amber Leech

Summer Fellows 2024

Mentor: Dr. Kara McShane

19 July 2024

While today there are a plethora of movies and television shows that attempt to provide adequate representation for marginalized groups such as the LGBT community, it has not always been so. In the 1930s, film writers implanted a list of rules titled the Motion Picture Production Code limiting what films were allowed to depict. Although this censorship ended in the 1960s, the lasting impacts of this Code have created a new kind of implied censorship that has affected how queer characters are represented since. Although movies and shows such as *Love, Simon* and *Heartstopper* provide hope that cinema is gradually moving away from the Code, it has no doubt left traces in media through the usage of queer characters as villains and the sheer amount of queer character deaths on camera.

The presence of queer coded characters as villains during the Motion Picture Production code creates the implication that homosexuality is immoral, and as audiences grow increasingly afraid of them, their deaths are used to justify their very existence and the harm that they have caused. The queer character's suffering is shown to be caused by their sexuality, while their existence as a homosexual disrupts the heterosexual world around them, causing suffering to everyone in proximity to their queerness. These messages began in the Code but have outlasted it since through Disney movies and drama films, sending messages to children that they should not replicate the behavior of these characters or accept people who do. They then imply to queer audiences that they should not be publicly out in fear of suffering the same fates as these characters, while suggesting to straight audiences that they should not be accepting of the LGBT community because they open themselves up to tragedy.

While movies that came out during the Motion Picture Production Code were released during a time when the current language that is in place to describe the LGBT community did not exist, this paper will be using modern language with modern definitions to describe them for

the sake of simplicity and comprehension of the reader. It is important to recognize that the word 'queer' was commonly used as a slur until recently, but this paper will instead be using it as a non-derogatory umbrella term for the whole community in the way that the LGBT community has reclaimed it.

The Motion Picture Production Code

In 1930, many film producers faced censorship from the government, so instead of giving the United States government total control over the content of their movies, producers created their own censorship guidelines (Phillips 464). This set of rules was titled the Motion Picture Production Code and officially went into effect in 1930 and lasted until 1968. Overall, the Code restricted positive representation of immorality or inappropriate subjects, stating that “no picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it”, or promote sympathy for “crime, wrong-doing, evil or sin” (462). Topics that the Code deemed ‘immoral’ include “illegal drugs, illicit sex, scenes of passion, prostitution, miscegenation, childbirth, and obscene and profane speech” (460-464). Although the Code never explicitly mentions homosexuality, it was banned through the inclusion of a rule stating that “sex perversion or any inference of it is forbidden” (Chon 22).

Even though the Code was self-imposed by producers, many writers and producers found it to be too constricting. Often, writers “found ways to hint at sexual subject matter without incurring the censor’s rebuke” (Phillips 465). It was especially hard for writers to incorporate queer characters, resulting in the usage of queer coding. Pauline Greenhill defines this phrase in “The Snow Queen’: Queer Coding in Male Director’s Films” as “a set of signals—words, forms, behaviors, signifiers of some kind—that protect the creator from the consequences of openly

expressing particular messages" (Greenhill 111-12). In this way, writers and producers could include queer characters without explicitly stating that they are queer, and therefore avoid violating the Code. Many film writers coded male queer characters by making them more effeminate, while queer coded female characters were instead portrayed as such through "tomboyishness" (Lugowski 17). According to David Lugowski in "Queering the (New) Deal: Lesbian and Gay Representation and the Depression-Era Cultural Politics of Hollywood's Production Code", queer coded men in film were "perceived as a failure", while "the lesbian was seen as a threat" (17). Many queer coded characters were also the villain or antagonist of their film and would then succumb to fates reserved to characters that the Code found to be immoral, meaning many queer characters would die by their end of their movie or be punished in some other way so as to signify their actions are immoral.

Films in the Code

Given that the Motion Picture Production Code took place between 1930 and 1968, there is a wide range of movies from this time period that contain queer coded characters, many of which were antagonists. Alfred Hitchcock, for example, created many movies featuring queer coded antagonists who were often murderers or serial killers, such as Norman Bates in *Psycho,* and Brandon Shaw and Philip Morgan in *Rope* (1948). Because the Code dictated that these characters needed to be punished in some way for their immorality, it was common for these queer coded characters to die by the end of their films. The most prominent examples of this are Marya Zaleska in *Dracula's Daughter* (1936), a queer coded vampire who dies via an arrow to the chest, and Sebastian Venable in *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1960), a man who is cannibalized after using his mother and cousin as bait to trap young men. Because these two characters'

wrong doings are tied to their sexuality, it sends the message that these characters are being punished for being queer as well, and their deaths work simultaneously as a final consequence for their actions and as evidence that their sexualities mark them as too distinct from other characters for them to continue to exist.

An early example of queer coded characters being placed into the role of a villain is Marya Zaleska in *Dracula's Daughter*, directed by Lambert Hillyer. In this film, Marya is the daughter of recently deceased Dracula, and the movie follows her as she attempts to overcome the fact that she is a vampire and lead a normal life. She enlists the help of Dr. Jeffrey Garth, a psychiatrist, who claims he has a "sympathetic treatment [that] will release the human mind from any obsession" (00:26:07). He encourages her to face her own obsession, saying "Don't avoid it. Meet it. Fight it" (00:31:10), leading Marya to invite a young woman, Lili, up to her apartment to model for a painting. Marya gives in to her vampirism, however, and attacks her. She then kidnaps Dr. Garth's assistant Janet and brings her to Dracula's castle in Transylvania. Dr. Garth follows them to Transylvania in order to save Janet, and Marya makes a deal with Dr. Garth that she will let Janet go free if he stays with Marya in Transylvania and becomes a vampire. This upsets Marya's assistant Sandor, who shoots Marya with an arrow, killing her instantly.

Marya is coded as queer through her apparent preference towards female victims, but because this attraction is expressed through her vampirism, her same-sex attraction is presented as a threat to other women. Although she does occasionally have male victims, she normally pursues them in order to complete some sort of transaction. When she attacks a man in the beginning, for example, she does so to gain access to her father's dead body (00:11:29). Her approach towards her attack on Lili, however, can only be described as seducement. After Sandor invites Lili inside Marya's apartment to model for a painting, Marya has Lili remove her

blouse. Marya stares at her, unblinking, and shines her ring in Lili's eye in an attempt to hypnotize her, and then slowly moves toward her. Lili says, "Please don't come any closer", screams, and then the camera cuts away as Marya presumably bites her (00:37:10). Lili then dies in a hospital as doctors attempt to help her remember Marya's attack through hypnosis (00:52:30). Marya's implied homosexuality is directly tied to her vampirism due to the seductive nature in which she attacks Lili, and the violent expression of this desire implies that homosexuality, not vampirism, is the inherent danger towards Lili. Female homosexual attraction is then painted as a monstrous trait that heterosexuals are helpless against, shown through Lili's pleas for mercy and frantic screaming. Marya as the queer coded character in Dracula's Daughter implies to the audience that Marya's queerness is what makes her so dangerous towards her victims, instead of her qualities as a vampire.

As *Dracula's Daughter* expresses Marya's same-sex attraction through violence, the film denounces homosexuality. Unfortunately, the association of queerness with monstrosity was common among movies from the Golden Age of Hollywood, such as *The Wolf Man* and the original *Dracula.* In Harry Benshoff's *The Monster Theory Reader*, Benshoff states that "these monsters can often be understood as racial, ethnic, and/or political/ideological Others while more frequently they are constructed primarily as sexual Others" such as "women, bisexuals, and homosexuals" (Benshoff 226). This association of monstrosity to queerness can be clearly seen in *Dracula's Daughter* through Marya's being a vampire, who are described in the film as "creatures" with "unnatural lives" (00:05:27). They are compared to "wolves" who "roam abroad…seeking their prey" (00:05:27), asserting Marya's status as a nonhuman predator. This distinction of Marya and other queer coded monsters creates a separation between queer people as individuals and cisgender heterosexuals. Jeffrey Cohen speaks of this separation in *Monster*

Theory: Reading Culture, stating that "the monster of prohibition polices the borders of the possible interdicting through its grotesque body some behaviors and actions, envaluing others" (Cohen 13). Through its usage of vampirism as a metaphor for homosexuality, *Dracula's Daughter* implies that queerness is inherently a negative trait through Marya's violence against female characters. Marya's implied homosexuality and resulting violence works to condemn homosexuality as a whole, while simultaneously showing the normality of heterosexuality in contrast to her.

When Marya dies in *Dracula's Daughter,* her death justifies her own unnatural existence. Throughout the film, Marya and others around her consistently comment on negative associations with vampirism. When Marya expresses that she wants to live a normal life now that Dracula is dead, for example, Sandor says that he sees "death" in her eyes (00:16:47). Marya later says that there is "nothing ahead for [her] but horror" and tells Dr. Garth that she needs him to "save [her] soul" (00:47:20). This constant association of Marya with death and damnation not only references the fact that she is a creature of the undead but seems to prophesize her death. While it's true that the likely reason for Marya's death is to appease the Code and show the immorality of her character, Marya's death also implies the notion that death is the only future for any queer coded character. As Cohen describes the way in which so-called 'Others' are changed to be scary, he states that "representing an anterior culture as monstrous justifies its displacement or extermination by rendering the act heroic" (Cohen 8). If, as Cohen says, the death of monstrous queer characters makes up for the fact that the character exists, it implies that as heterosexuality remains dominant among other characters, queerness has no right to exist. Marya must die at the end of *Dracula's Daughter* because her existence as a queer character is out of place with her surroundings. It is unnatural, just as her vampirism is, which is so closely

tied to her heterosexuality. Marya's queerness does not fit in with the heterosexual characters around her, and so her death restores the natural order.

The trend of queer coded character deaths continues twenty-three years after *Dracula's Daughter* in another movie released during the Motion Picture Production Code, titled *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1960). This film follows a young woman named Catherine Holly who witnesses the death of her cousin Sebastian Venable while they are on vacation together in Cabeza de Lobo. Catherine is then sent to a mental institution by her Aunt Violet, Sebastian's Mother, who wants to have her lobotomized. When Dr. Cukrowicz meets Catherine, however, he is unsure whether or not she is mentally ill and helps her move to an area of the mental institution where she would have more freedom. As Violet pushes for the lobotomy, Dr. Cukrowicz slowly helps Catherine to remember what occurred on her vacation with Sebastian. According to Catherine, Sebastian used Catherine and Violet on their numerous vacations to "procure" young men and boys for him, implying Sebastian's homosexuality (01:18:07). These men eventually chase Sebastian through town until they attack him and cannibalize him, resulting in Sebastian's death.

While Sebastian is not a monster in the sense that he is a supernatural creature such as Marya Zaleska, he is referred to by other characters in a way that instills into the viewer a sense of caution and apprehension. He dies off screen before the movie begins, but his lack of a physical presence is made up for through different off-putting tales that other characters tell of him. For example, Catherine tells Dr. Cukrowicz that Sebastian had an "image…of himself as a sort of sacrifice to a terrible sort of God…[he] saw something in the universe, something terrible in himself" (00:47:36). She later says that Sebastian "talked about people as if they were items on a menu. That one's delicious looking" (01:07:04), while Sebastian's mother states that her husband "died because of Sebastian. Killed him, some people thought" (00:41:41). Similar to

Marya, the sense of unease that descriptions of Sebastian cause are often tied to his sexuality, such as him seeing 'something' terrible in himself and the way he is described to see others as food. These descriptions of Sebastian set him apart from the other straight characters, and like Marya, he dies so as to show that this distance is too great to justify his existence. The sense of apprehension associated with Sebastian throughout *Suddenly, Last Summer* works to justify his death.

Although Sebastian is dead, he seems to hover in the background as his presence has a lasting negative affect on Violet and Catherine, showing how their involvement in Sebastian's homosexual behavior demands them to face some kind of punishment. Sebastian is punished through his death, like Marya in *Dracula's Daughter*, but his accomplices instead face problems concerning mental health. For example, Catherine remains institutionalized from the time of Sebastian's death to the end of the movie, although it is unclear whether or not she is truly mentally ill. As she recounts the circumstances of Sebastian's death, Violet experiences a kind of mental breakdown and believes that Dr. Cukrowicz is Sebastian, signifying the deterioration of her mental health. Even though Sebastian is not there, his presence can be felt through the way in which his existence negatively impacts the mental health of his family members. In *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, Cohen discusses the way in which monsters in literature affect cultural structures, saying "they are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. And so the monster is dangerous, a form suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions" (Cohen 6). While it's been established that Sebastian's queerness is the primary reason for his death, it is also the cause of the mental suffering of everyone around him. By pursuing other men before his death, he disrupts the structure of the heterosexual world, and because he had administered the help of his

mother and female cousin to do so, they must also face negative consequences for going against this structure. Although Violet and Catherine are not queer themselves, they are complicit in Sebastian's queerness, and must therefore be penalized.

Marya and Sebastian in *Dracula's Daughter* and *Suddenly, Last Summer* are both villainized through their implied sexualities, implying that their homosexuality is a danger to other characters around them. As they die, they prove that their queerness holds too much of a distinction from other characters for them to continue to exist, while the acts of their deaths simultaneously work as a punishment for disrupting the natural order of heterosexuality. Although Sebastian is not a villain or monster in the traditional sense, Sebastian and Marya are both prominent examples of the way in which queer coded characters during the Motion Picture Production code were often portrayed as antagonists, causing them to succumb to horrible deaths with the implication that their homosexuality was to blame.

The Disney Renaissance

Although the Motion Picture Production Code ended in 1968, the way in which queer coded characters were portrayed while it was in effect had a long-lasting effect in film. By the 1990s, there was a higher chance of fictional characters in film or TV being explicitly queer, but media such as children's films and Disney movies were more likely to use the Code-era practice of queer coding. Similar to Code-era movies, queer coded characters were often the antagonist of the film, such as Jafar from *Aladdin,* Hades from *Hercules*. Themes seen in Code-era characters such as Marya and Sebastian, however, can especially be noticed in the characters Ursula from *The Little Mermaid* and Scar from *The Lion King.* Ursula and Scar's presence as villains mimics Sebastian Venable through the way they lurk in the background, while their seclusion from other

characters, visible difference in appearances, and attempts to tear apart heterosexual relationships and familial structures in their respective films all emphasize the message to the young audience members that queerness is a threat against heterosexuality. These Disney movies teach children the ways in which they should or should not act by depicting these queer coded characters as villains, while convincing children that queer people in real life are as manipulative and dangerous as they are depicted in film.

Traces of code-era queer coding of antagonistic characters can be traced all the way to Ursula in *The Little Mermaid.* This film follows the mermaid Ariel as she falls in love with the human Prince Eric, despite her father's wishes against Ariel visiting the surface of the ocean. As Ariel disobeys her father, a sea witch named Ursula watches her actions from afar in an underwater cave, often through the eyes of her two eels (00:10:55). She expresses bitterness for being "banished and exiled and practically starving while [Triton] and his flimsy fish fold celebrate" (00:11:34) and intends to use Ariel to enact revenge on Triton and cause his "undoing" (00:11:58). Ursula lures Ariel into her cave using her eels and convinces her to take a deal in which Ariel can gain legs for three days, and if she receives a kiss from her true love, she will be able to keep her legs, but if not, Ursula will claim Ariel's soul (00:42:16). Ariel succeeds in winning Eric's love, but not without Ursula making repeated attempts to sabotage the beginning of their relationship. Ursula transforms herself into a human and casts a spell over Eric to convince him to marry her, preventing Ariel from kissing Eric before her three-day time period ends. Ursula then makes a deal with Triton to take his soul instead of Ariel's (00:11:24), causing Ursula to take Triton's crown and claim the title of "ruler of the ocean" (01:13:29). Of course, Ariel and Eric are able to defeat Ursula, and the movie ends with Triton reclaiming his throne and freeing all of the other souls Ursula had been holding captive (01:15:23).

Ursula's appearance is significantly different than most other characters in *The Little Mermaid*, and this difference works to associate Ursula's queerness with her position as a villain. While most other female characters in this movie are depicted as young, thin girls with long green tails, Ursula is instead depicted as an octopus with several black tentacle-esque tails, and her skin is a light purple, marking her as the only mermaid with a skin tone other than white. Most of her physical differences, however, stem from the fact that her character was modeled after a real life drag queen named Divine. Divine's influence is visible through Ursula's red lips and intense eyeshadow, which mimic Divine's stage makeup, while Divine's dramatic mannerisms and dancing in her song "Poor Unfortunate Souls" replicate that of a drag performance (00:40:15). Ursula is physically different from others in the movie to distinguish her as a villain, but because her differences are also linked to a prominent member of the LGBT community and therefore mark her as queer coded, Ursula's physical appearance ties her queerness to her antagonism. Just as with Marya in *Dracula's Daughter*, this association of queerness with villainy implies that Ursula is a villain because of her implied queerness. Because Ursula is queer coded through her association with the drag queen Divine, her physical appearance that distinguishes her as a villain also directly ties her status as a villain with her queerness.

As Ursula attempts to usurp the throne from Triton, she echoes Sebastian from *Suddenly, Last Summer* through the way she is separated from the rest of the cast but lingers in the background while manipulating the events of the movie, implying that she is kept separate due to the threat her queerness holds to other characters. While Sebastian is separated through death, Ursula is alive but more commonly found sequestered in her cave while her eels do her bidding. For example, while Ariel is crying because Triton destroyed her collection of human artifacts,

Ursula chooses this vulnerable moment to send her eels to convince Ariel to visit Ursula, instead of going to visit Ariel herself (00:36:18). Because Ursula is kept away from other characters, it implies that there is something dangerous about her that requires separation for the safety of the other mermaids in the movie. The plot confirms this given that she spends the movie actively plotting to take down King Triton and take the throne for herself, while manipulating Ariel in order to achieve this goal. Ursula is the only queer coded character, and because her queerness is closely associated with her place as a villain, her physical separation from other heterosexual characters confirms her as a safety risk. It implies that there is something hazardous about homosexuality that requires a physical distance. The fact that Ursula nearly succeeds in claiming the throne from Triton not only confirms the need for this physical separation but shows that it is not enough due to the apparent powerful danger that queerness holds. Ursula's seclusion and attempts to manipulate in order to get her way suggest that her queerness holds a danger to other characters due to the affiliation between her villain-hood and queerness.

Ursula's attempts to block Ariel from entering a relationship with Eric illustrate how, like in *Suddenly, Last Summer,* queerness is depicted through queer coded characters as disruptive to heterosexuality. After Ariel rescues Eric from a shipwreck early in the movie, she immediately falls in love, although the two do not have a chance to talk. Ariel then gains legs through her deal with Ursula, but as she attempts to win Eric's attraction, Ursula tries to prevent their relationship from forming. For example, she steals Ariel's voice as part of their deal, preventing Eric from recognizing Ariel as the girl who saved him from a shipwreck, whom he had expressed attraction for immediately after the event occurred. Later, when Ariel and Eric almost kiss, Ursula's eels flip over their rowboat in order to prevent Ariel from receiving her true love's kiss before the end of Ariel's three-day deadline (01:02:24). As Ursula notices that her plan to sabotage Eric and

Ariel's relationship is failing, she transforms herself into a human and puts Eric under a spell (01:04:02), influencing him to marry Ursula (01:05:19). Ursula's attempts to prevent Eric and Ariel's relationship from forming imply that if one character refuses to conform to heterosexuality, they will not allow anyone else to make their own decisions and conform themselves. By sending Ariel to the surface under the false pretenses of encouraging her to pursue Eric, Ursula also separates Ariel from her father and sisters, implying a desire to overthrow a heterosexual family unit entirely. Ursula's refusal to allow Ariel to form a heterosexual relationship or remain with her heterosexual family further shows how queerness in *The Little Mermaid* overpowers heterosexuality and prevents others from engaging in heterosexual lifestyles. Ursula's attempts to prevent Ariel from having a relationship with Eric or her father imply that the existence of queerness in the proximity of heterosexuality is inherently dangerous for its continuation.

In 1994, Disney released *The Lion King*, featuring the heavily queer coded character Scar as the antagonist. *The Lion King* centers around a family of lions who rule Pride Rock in an unnamed place in Africa. Mufasa is the leader of the pack, and he is assisted by a queer coded hornbill named Zazu. Mufasa's brother Scar dislikes the way in which the hierarchy places him to the side and wishes to overthrow Mufasa and take the throne for himself. As part of Scar's first attempts to do so, he convinces Mufasa's young cub Simba to visit an elephant graveyard (00:12:20), where a pack of hyenas awaits ready to kill him (00:19:15). This plan fails, however, when Mufasa is informed by Zazu of the situation and comes to Simba's rescue (00:22:48), leading Scar to resort to killing Mufasa by pushing him off of a cliff and into a stampede (00:35:31). Scar then convinces Simba that Mufasa's death was his fault, telling him to "run away and never return" (00:38:25). Simba leaves, and Scar takes the throne for himself

(00:40:30) while Simba lives in exile with a meerkat named Timon and a warthog named Pumbaa. Simba stays with them until he reaches adulthood, when his childhood best friend Nala finds him and convinces him to come back to Pride Rock and save them from Scar, who has "let the hyenas take over the Pride Lands" without providing access to food or water (01:01:25). After some persuasion, Simba returns to the Pride Lands and takes the position as king from Scar, whom the hyenas promptly maul to death (01:20:40).

Although Scar has his own goals and storyline, Zazu is more two-dimensional in comparison through his unwavering loyalty to Mufasa, and his position as a servant rather than a villain as a queer coded character suggests he is only accepted because of his compliance. He seems to dislike Scar, telling him that he will "never be king" (00:05:15), but he spends most of the movie either trapped in Scar's cage (00:48:26) or following orders for Mufasa and his family. For example, when Simba tries to sneak out to the elephant graveyard and asks his mother if he and Nala can visit the water hole, Sarabi sends Zazu out to watch after them (00:14:04). This is in stark contrast to Marya from *Dracula's Daughter*, Sebastian from *Suddenly, Last Summer*, and Ursula from *The Little Mermaid* in that unlike these other characters, Zazu is not an antagonist or villain whose actions involve harming others or wishing to gain power. The key difference between Zazu and these other queer coded characters is Zazu's lack of agency. Most of what Zazu does, he does because someone else told him to, such as when he agrees to Mufasa using him as a "pouncing lesson" for Simba (00:10:39), which Zazu deems "humiliating" (00:10:47) even though he agrees to be used as bait anyway. Zazu's status as a servant as opposed to a villain suggests that to Disney, a queer character is only acceptable when they follow other's directions instead of making their own decisions. Unlike Scar, who dies for the actions he takes throughout the course of the film, Zazu is allowed to remain in the space he occupies in the film,

proving how queer people can only be accepted if they comply with heterosexuals around them. This compliance also falls into the idea of queer conformity. Zazu is allowed to be queer without facing any repercussions through death or otherwise tragic endings, but his compliance suggests that in order to be accepted by heterosexuals, he must push down his own character traits in order to conform with heterosexuality. In this way, the extent of Zazu's queerness is toned down as he complies with his heterosexual surroundings. Zazu's unfaltering devotion to Mufasa implies that queer characters can only be accepted if they are compliant and do as heterosexuals tell them to do.

The Motion Picture Production Code continues to haunt *The Lion King* through the way in which Scar pushes Simba out of Pride Rock, away from his heterosexual love interest and into a homosocial environment. When Scar convinces Simba to leave the Pride Lands, Simba finds companionship in Timon and Pumbaa, who don't appear to have any other friends besides each other. They spend all of their time together as they scavenge for food, depicting a homosocial bond in a movie full of heterosexual relationships, such as Mufasa and Sarabi and Simba and Nala. Timon and Pumbaa gladly take Simba in and raise him, as implied through a montage of them walking through the forest as Simba slowly goes from a cub to a full-grown lion (00:47:20) and teach him to eat plants and bugs instead of other animals. Because Scar's manipulation is the reason as to why Simba leaves Pride Rock and joins Timon and Pumbaa, there is the implication that as Scar gains power over the kingdom, he pushes the primary heterosexual character into a homosocial atmosphere. While before his only other friend was the female cub Nala, now his family and social interactions come from two male characters who are incredibly close to one another. This depicts Scar as a villain not just for trying to usurp the throne, but for preventing Simba from forming a heterosexual relationship with Nala, much like Ursula's attempts to

prevent Ariel and Eric from forming a relationship in *The Little Mermaid*. Scar is the direct cause for Simba abandoning is heterosexual love interest and joining a homosocial atmosphere, positioning Scar as a villain for preventing heterosexual relationships from forming.

As Scar dies, it emphasizes the audience's fear towards him and the necessity of his death. Like Ursula, Scar dies at the end of *The Lion King*, but in a way that replicates Sebastian's death in *Suddenly, Last Summer*. As Scar begs Simba for mercy, he tells Simba that "the hyenas…are the real enemy" and should be punished instead (01:18:37). The hyenas overhear this, and maul Scar to death (01:20:40) in a similar fashion to the way in which Sebastian is eaten alive by the young men he had had relations with. When compared, these two scenes indicate that those who had killed Scar and Sebastian only did so out of self-defense, therefore justifying their murders. While Sebastian and Scar's deaths are similar, their respective movies create vastly different relationships between them and their audiences. Sebastian, for example, is dead before *Suddenly, Last Summer* can begin, eliminating any fear the viewer may hold toward Sebastian. The audience is then left to watch the aftermath that Sebastian's existence has caused. In *The Lion King*, however, we watch as Scar manipulates Simba (00:12:20) and expresses his desire to kill Mufasa through his song "Be Prepared" (00:27:18), without that feeling of certainty that Scar will be defeated which is present in *Suddenly, Last Summer*. *The Lion King* plays with the audience's fear of the queer coded character, and when Scar finally dies at the hands of the hyenas, it results in a feeling of catharsis. This sense of relief emphasizes how Scar's death is necessary, once again proving the hyenas as justified for killing him. Like Sebastian, Scar's death makes up for the harm he has caused as the audience grows increasingly afraid of him throughout *The Lion King.*

As children watch Disney movies with repeated themes of antagonistic villains, they begin to develop a warped, homophobic sense of the queer community. Scar and Ursula have remarkably similar plotlines in *The Lion King* and *The Little Mermaid* respectively. For example, both are exiled from their communities and spend most of their time in dark caves and wish to usurp the current king so they can gain power for themselves. They both attempt to gain this power by separating the youngest child of their respective rulers, and then both die by the hands of those they have wronged. As this pattern is repeated through Disney movies, kids begin to expect other queer-coded characters to act in a similar manner. According to Julie C. Garlen and Jennifer A. Sandlin in their article "CHAPTER ONE: Introduction: Popular Culture and Disney Pedagogies", as Disney incorporates fairy tale characters into their movies, "'children tend to believe that Disney's version of the fairy tale is the real story'" (Garlen and Sandlin 9). Garlen and Sandlin state that "exposing students to traditional fairy tales alongside Disney retellings provides an opportunity to broaden their understanding of textual and cultural diversity" (Garlen and Sandlin 9). Based on this line of thinking, queer-coded villains in Disney movies would have less of an effect as long as young viewers had positive queer influences in their lives. This is not always the case, however, especially because *The Little Mermaid* was released during the height of the AIDS epidemic in 1989. Homophobia permeated much of culture, encouraged by a stigma against AIDS patients, resulting in a likelihood that children did not have much reference for what queer people are like outside of these queer coded Disney villains. As they repeatedly watch queer coded Disney villains who plot against the main character in order to gain power, it sends the message that the queer community is untrustworthy. Instead of broadening their knowledge of diversity (9), children in the audience instead have a narrower knowledge of queer people that is steeped in prejudice. Disney's repeated use of queer coded villains convinces

children that they should not trust the queer community, or those who exhibit the same traits that queer coded characters do.

As children watch *The Lion King* and *The Little Mermaid*, they learn not only how queer people supposedly act, but how they themselves are expected to behave. Ursula and Scar both look and act differently than most other characters in their respective films. Ursula has exaggerated makeup that mimics drag makeup, for example, while Scar has a different way of speaking and a different sense of humor that arguably exhibits the concept of camp, which Glyn Davis defines in his book chapter "Camp and Queer and the New Queer Director: Case Study - Gregg Araki" as a behavior that gay men utilize in order to "incarnat[e] the homophobe's worst fears" and "actively flaunt and luxuriate in their queerness" (Davis 55). As kids watch only villains act like this, they subsequently learn not to replicate the behavior that makes the characters queer coded. In the article "Learning with Disney: Children's Animation and the Politics of Innocence", David Whitely mentions the idea of "coercive ideology", saying that "mass culture functions as part of a hegemonic means of social control, "inculcating a kind of passive acquiescence through the superficial pleasures it affords" (Whitley 78). Disney movies make up a large part of this culture, and as kids watch these repeated stereotypes attached to villains, they understand that these character traits are inherently immoral and should not be replicated. These characters then die on screen, sending the message to children that these characteristics are punishable. Garlen and Sandlin examine this phenomenon in their article, saying that "Disney Princess play [is] a site of identity construction through which children learn gender expectations" (Garlen and Sandlin 12). They learn that what is expected of them is not Scar and Ursula's mannerisms, but instead the actions of main characters such as Simba and Ariel, whose happiness in the end stems from rejoining the families that Scar and Ursula

separated them from and beginning heterosexual relationships. Queer coded villains such as Scar and Ursula provide a false model for children for how queer people supposedly act, while teaching children that they should not replicate the actions of the LGBT community because they are immoral.

The Little Mermaid and The Lion King carry echoes of the Motion Picture Production Code through the way Ursula and Scar, the queer coded villains, negatively affect other characters' lives while kept separate away from the cast, as well as the threat they hold to heterosexuality through their homosexuality. As children watch these movies, they receive these messages and come to associate queer coded mannerisms with the actions of Scar and Ursula, while simultaneously learning to not trust others who act in such a way and to not act in a similar manner themselves. Despite the fact that the Motion Picture Production Code had ended decades before *The Little Mermaid* and *The Lion King* were released, the similarities between Marya Zaleska of *Dracula's Daughter*, Sebastian Venable in *Suddenly, Last Summer*, and Scar and Ursula prove how the Motion Picture Production Code haunts film through the ways it has affected LGBT representation.

The 2000s

By the early 2000s, fully out queer characters had managed to integrate themselves onto the screen, both on film and in television. *The L Word*, for example, aired in 2004 as a drama series featuring a cast of all lesbian and bisexual women, while *Will and Grace* was a sitcom that began airing in 1998 and ran through the 2000s that showcased the lives of a gay lawyer and his straight female roommate. Examples of queer characters in film, however, were not as lighthearted. Movies such as *Brokeback Mountain* (2006), while groundbreaking in its inclusion

of a queer romance between two men, showcased only the tragedy and homophobia that queer people in rural America face, while *A Single Man* (2010) depicts a gay man's depression and suicide ideation after the death of his long-term partner. Although *Brokeback Mountain* and *A Single Man* are groundbreaking in their depictions of homosexual relationships that the Motion Picture Production Code would have outlawed, these movies offer the message to their audiences that homosexuality in men only brings them despair and death, while simultaneously causing distress in the women in their lives and preventing them from performing heterosexuality.

By 2005, the film *Brokeback Mountain* reached theaters, showing a new trend of out-of-the-closet queer characters starring as main characters in drama films. The movie follows characters Ennis Del Mar and Jack Twist as they take a sheepherding job on the titular Brokeback Mountain. They begin a relationship, despite Ennis' engagement to a woman named Alma at home, and they go their separate ways after their seasonal job ends. Ennis has two children with Alma, while Jack meets a woman named Lureen, who he marries and has a child with. Jack and Ennis reunite, however, when Jack sends a postcard in the mail to Ennis (01:01:44) before coming to visit Ennis where he lives in Wyoming. They proceed to have a decades-long affair in which they go on camping or fishing trips together once or twice a year, although Jack repeatedly expresses a desire to abandon their lives and run a ranch together (01:11:00). Their relationship lasts until Jack's death, which Ennis learns of through a returned postcard meant for Jack with the word "Deceased" stamped in red across the back (01:52:52). Ennis calls Lureen, who informs him that Jack drowned in his own blood after a car tire blew up in his face, but as Lureen recounts this horrific story, images flash across the screen of Jack being beaten to death by a group of men (01:54:00).

Although *Brokeback Mountain* is centered around Ennis' relationship with Jack, the film puts a considerable amount of emphasis on Ennis' marriage to Alma, implying that homosexuality is destructive to heteronormative family structures and relationships. Cracks begin to form in Ennis and Alma's marriage when Jack visits Ennis for the first time since their job at Brokeback Mountain, and Alma witnesses them passionately embracing through the window. Alma can be seen crying while clutching her child to her chest as Ennis promptly leaves for a fishing trip with Jack (01:09:08), although she does not confront Ennis with the nature of his relationship with Jack until after their divorce. This interaction ends with Ennis storming out of the house, leaving Alma in tears (01:28:39). Ennis' affair and his wife's reaction creates the idea that homosexuality negatively affects the heterosexual women in its proximity. Ennis' sexuality is portrayed as a tool that is used to hurt his wife, turning Alma into a damsel in distress as the homosexuality in the film tears apart her heterosexual marriage. Alma's marriage and nuclear family of husband and two kids is subsequently ruined, depicting homosexuality as destructive to the whole family. Ennis' homosexuality in *Brokeback Mountain* is portrayed as a weapon aimed toward heterosexual women and their families through the film's focus on Alma's despair.

There are very few moments in which Ennis and Jack are depicted as happy in their relationship, portraying homosexuality as their primary cause of distress. Although *Brokeback Mountain* focuses on the romantic relationship between Ennis and Jack, their relationship is rarely shown to be a positive experience for either of them. Several times, they are shown to be punching one another and drawing blood (00:40:20), and often argue about their inability to see one another or spend their lives together. For example, when Ennis expresses paranoia that others in his town are "suspicious" of his sexuality (01:32:15), Jack tells him to consider moving

to Texas, where Jack lives. Ennis shuts him down with a sarcastic remark, however, saying, "maybe you can convince Alma to let you and Lureen adopt the girls, and we can just live together herding sheep, and then it will rain money…and whiskey will flow in the streams" as Jack swears at him and storms off. In their last argument before Jack's death, Jack yells "We could've had a good life together…had us a place of our own. but you didn't want it, Ennis…I wish I knew how to quit you" (01:46:46). The normally stoic Ennis breaks down in tears and says "Then why don't you?…It's because of you, Jack, that I'm like this. I'm nothing, I'm nowhere…I just can't stand this anymore" (01:47:50). This constant showcase of emotional distress in Jack and Ennis compared with a lack of moments between them where they are happy to be around one another insinuates that if one follows the path of homosexuality, it will only lead to unhappiness. In this scene, they both express that they wish for their relationship to end, implying that continuing their relationship is not worth their current misery. Ennis's homosexuality causes him emotional distress because he is unable to have the kind of relationship he desires with Jack without fear of others' intervention, and this leads to Jack's emotional distress because Ennis is unable to give him the life that he wants. The affair itself leads Ennis' wife to despair because her marriage is destroyed by Ennis' homosexuality, ultimately depicting homosexuality as a character flaw that causes anguish to the queer person, the same-sex partner to the queer person, and the heterosexual who wishes to be in the queer person's life. The unhappiness that Jack and Ennis feel due to their relationship positions homosexuality as the source of their misery, as well as everyone else's.

As Jack and Ennis' relationship progresses, they face some sort of setback in their lives, further depicting homosexuality as a source of unhappiness. Even as Jack and Ennis get a few moments of happiness together throughout the first half of the film, there is consistently some

kind of negative consequence they have to face with each encounter. Ennis and Jack's first negative consequence occurs when Ennis disobeys their boss's orders in sleeping with their sheep overnight. Instead, Ennis sleeps in Jack's tent as he has stayed up too late, but when he checks on the sheep in the morning, he finds one dead and covered in blood, appearing to have been attacked by an animal. The second time that Jack and Ennis share the tent, Aguirre, their boss, spots them the next day as they wrestle in a homoerotic manner. Aguirre then approaches Jack to tell him that his "Uncle Harold's in the hospital with pneumonia", and doctors "don't expect he'll make it" (00:35:26), and Aguirre later refuses to give Jack the job again due to the way Jack and Ennis "[made] the time pass up there" (00:46:43). The third time that Jack and Ennis share their tent due to a heavy storm and hail, their sheep mix with another herd, and they have difficulty separating them due to the fact that the paint markings on their sheep had worn off (00:36:15). Later, the first time Jack and Ennis see each other after their time spent together on Brokeback Mountain, Alma sees them embracing, forever ruining Ennis' marriage with her. Almost every time Jack and Ennis spend time together in a way that reaffirms their romantic relationship, they face some kind of negative consequence, implying that homosexuality is detrimental to Jack and Ennis' lives. Even as they are able to find moments of happiness with one another while secluded away on Brokeback Mountain, that happiness is fleeting as they will eventually have to face repercussions. The large amount of stress and anguish that Jack and Ennis have to face because of their relationship with one another compared to the moments of peace that are few and far between insinuates that homosexuality will make a person's life worse and is therefore not worth the cost.

As the repercussions for Jack and Ennis' relationship build up, they eventually lead to Jack's death, not only solidifying the misery that homosexual men might face but suggesting that

their only fate is a violent end. After Ennis realizes that Jack has died, he calls Jack's wife Lureen in hopes of learning what had happened to him. Lureen tells him that Jack died after a car tire exploded in his face, but as she speaks, images of Jack being beaten to death are overlaid on the screen. While that actual manner of Jack's remains ambiguous, both circumstances are violent and painful, signifying that, much like the queer coded character deaths during the Motion Picture Production Code and Disney Renaissance, Jack's death is a consequence for his status as a queer individual. The hate crime that Jack possibly experiences is eerily reminiscent of a story from Ennis' childhood that he recounts when Jack mentions a desire to buy a ranch. Two men named Earl and Rich lived together in Ennis's hometown, and according to Ennis, Earl was brutally murdered in a hate crime by a group of men who left Earl to die in an irrigation ditch (01:12:00). Ennis' father forced Ennis to view Earl's body to instill in him the fate that many homosexual men face, leaving Ennis with an ingrained fear of homophobic retaliation if he expresses his sexuality. It is possible that Jack's death via a hate crime is Ennis' imagination as he pictures his worst fear happening to Jack, the very usage of this type of death associated with Jack that is repeated through the story of Earl suggests that this is the only fate that queer men can achieve. Ennis escapes this fate because he is not as vocal as Jack about a wish to live together, leaving Jack to face the biggest consequence of their relationship alone, which would be death. The repeated usage of hate crime-caused deaths in *Brokeback Mountain* for characters who express desire to prioritize their same-sex relationships suggests that homosexual individuals who pursue their sexualities instead of pushing them down will face violent, tragic endings and ruin their lives forever.

Like *Brokeback Mountain* (2006), *A Single Man* (2010) is a drama film that showcases the tragic lives of two men in a homosexual relationship. A dream sequence within the first few

minutes of *A Single Man* reveals that the main character George has lost his long-term partner Jim to a car accident. As George prepares for work, the screen cuts to images of Jim as he had been alive, with the coloring of the scene brighter and more colorful when he is portrayed on screen (00:05:51). These flashbacks are interrupted by the present however, when George abruptly clutches his chest and winces in pain (00:05:51). Before George leaves his house, he unlocks a desk drawer and pulls out a handgun, which he places into his briefcase (00:15:00). The film then follows George through his day as a college professor while he plans to commit suicide. He briefly finds companionship in Kenny, one of his students, and Carlos, a prostitute. Once home, George prepares to commit suicide with his gun, but is interrupted when his female best friend Charley calls and invites him to dinner (00:54:00). George arrives at her house, and Charley sparks a drunken fight when she insinuates that George and Jim's relationship wasn't serious (01:04:00). George and Charley inexplicably resolve their argument with a kiss (01:09:11), and George spends the rest of his evening skinny dipping with Kenny (01:19:50). *A Single Man* ends when George locks his gun back in his drawer, signifying his newfound will to continue living, right before dying of a heart attack (01:31:50).

The relationship between George and Charley in *A Single Man* implies that George's homosexuality is the sole reason for Charley's inability to be in a relationship, continuing the theme from *Brokeback Mountain* and movies in the Disney Renaissance that homosexuality prevents heterosexual women from performing their sexualities. When George visits Charley's house, she asks him "don't you ever miss this? What we could have been to each other, having a real relationship and kids?" (01:04:00). She later says that "I only have you now because you lost Jim…It's not as easy for a woman. I've done everything the way that I was supposed to and all I have to keep me company is a bottle of gin" (01:06:22). If George was not gay, Charley would

have had the chance to marry him and have children, but because he is gay, she is implying that it is his fault she was not able to settle down. George's personal love life that he keeps separate from Charley is somehow the cause of her misfortune. In this way, *A Single Man* positions homosexuality as disruptive to homosexuality, while simultaneously almost placing George into an antagonistic role towards one of the main heterosexual characters. Their friendship appears more complicated as the film goes on, as George tells Jim in a flashback that he had "slept with [Charley]...a few times when [they] were younger" (00:36:26), and George and Charley later kiss after their argument. This apparent closeness that they have emphasizes how the film wants the audience to believe that Charley had a chance in forming a relationship with George and would be able to settle down with him if not for the fact that he pursues men instead. Charley's outburst suggests, like *The Little Mermaid* and *The Lion King*, that the existence of a homosexual person gets in the way of other people's ability to perform heterosexuality.

George's death from a heart attack despite the growth he shows as a character through his will to live in *A Single Man* demonstrates the film's message that queer individuals are doomed for unhappy endings. Throughout *A Single Man,* George actively considers suicide, going as far as to carry a gun in his briefcase throughout his day at work (00:15:00). He finds solace in the company of his student Kenny, who he finds in a bar and goes skinny dipping with, but as soon as he finds mental "clarity" (01:30:50), George falls to the ground and dies of a heart attack (01:31:50). Similar to Marya in *Dracula's Daughter*, George's death is sudden and shocking. While it's true that the main goal driving George throughout the film is a wish to die, his development as a character results in him pushing through this desire and finding a glimpse of happiness amidst his grief over his late partner. As soon as his desire to live comes back, he dies, ultimately rendering his arc in finding a will to live pointless. George's death is not entirely

without warning, however. At the very beginning, George winces and clutches his heart (00:05:50) before heading to his job at a university, and later Charley mentions how George had a heart attack a year beforehand (00:57:48). Not only does this foreshadow George's heart attack, but it shows the futility of his actions, both in his wishes to commit suicide and his decision not to, because no matter what decision he makes, he will still die. This narrative applied to a queer man implies that no matter what decision they make, queer people are inherently doomed for an unhappy ending.

Despite the realism of the deaths in *Brokeback Mountain* and *A Single Man*, they show lasting effects of the Motion Picture Production Code on film. Unfortunately, both *Brokeback Mountain* and *A Single Man* portray events that are likely to happen on a daily basis. Approximately "805,000 Americans have a heart attack" each year for example, while approximately 43,000 fatal car crashes occur in the U.S. per year. The violent hate crimes that are depicted in *Brokeback Mountain* are not uncommon either. One year after the short story that *Brokeback Mountain* was based after was released, "21-year-old gay man Matthew Shepard…was beaten to death by two men on his way home from a bar… On trial, his killers confessed to the murder being due to "gay panic"" (Dilley 150). Out of response to *Brokeback Mountain*, Focus Features created a section on its website called "Share Your Story", where "thousands of anonymous writers" shared their personal stories "of isolation and abuse in rural America, tales of suicide and loss, marriage and denial, and finally escape (it was mainly those who got away who wrote in)" (Rich 47). The fates that Jack Twist, George, and Jim meet might be realistic, but when put in context with the history of the Motion Picture Production Code and the ways in which it has continued to affect film, these characters' deaths prove how queer characters in film do nothing but confirm the notion that to be queer is to be doomed. Characters

such as Marya Zaleska and Sebastian Venable exemplify how antagonistic characters from the Code were often queer coded and therefore had to die to appease the Code, while Ursula and Scar from the Disney Renaissance show how this theme of dead queer coded characters continued long after the Code ended. Unlike these characters, Jack Twist, George, and Jim are explicitly gay instead of queer coded and hold positions as protagonists instead of antagonists and yet they all still die by the end of their respective films. Jack and Earl's deaths also mimic Matthew Shepard's, and while this shows how these characters' fates are realistic, this parallel emphasizes *Brokeback Mountain*'s message that being queer can ruin one's life by placing them in danger of homophobic attacks. Their deaths prove the longevity of the dead-queer-antagonist character trope that the Motion Picture Production Code created, showing how the Code has haunted film decades after it ended.

While depicting homophobia in mainstream movies raises awareness to the issues that the LGBT community faces, Hollywood was arguably oversaturated with both death and tragic endings for queer coded characters around the time when *A Single Man* and *Brokeback Mountain* were released. The deaths of George and Jim in *A Single Man* are obvious examples, while other examples include *Boys Don't Cry* (1999), *My Own Private Idaho* (1991), *Milk* (2008) *Mysterious Skin* (2004). There are very few examples of queer characters with happy endings from movies in the 2000s, however. By only sharing the tragedy that the queer community might face, these 2000s movies demonstrate to queer audiences that the violence and tragedy they see on screen will be their fate as well. Those who have never met a queer person will assume the same and be less likely to be accepting of family or friends who come out of fear for their safety. This cycle is likely to push more queer individuals into the closet as they become less likely to want to pursue same-sex relationships and be themselves for fear of homophobic reactions and become

unwilling to come out to those close to them. The repeated themes of death and tragic endings for queer and queer coded characters that began during the Motion Picture Production Code increases the marginalization of the LGBT community by sending the message that they are ill-fated, encouraging queer individuals to remain closeted and heterosexuals to be unsupportive.

The queer relationships in *A Single Man* and *Brokeback Mountain* imply that homosexuality in men is destructive not just to the homosexual, but to the straight women around them and their heterosexuality, sending the message to queer and straight audiences that death and tragedy are the only possible futures for them or their queer loved ones. Although the TV shows that aired in the early 2000s offered a glimmer of hope for the future of LGBT representation, movies that were released offered nothing but examples of the worst events that could happen to a queer person encouraging the marginalization of the LGBT community. The deaths of George and Jim in *A Single Man* and Jack Twist in *Brokeback Mountain* continue the ongoing trend of queer deaths that began with queer coded antagonists during the Motion Picture Production Code, further showing the impact of the Code on LGBT representation.

Although the Motion Picture Production Code ended in 1968, the way in which queer coded characters were represented during that time has impacted LGBT representation through the usage of queer characters as villains and fictional queer deaths. Characters such as Marya Zaleska and Sebastian Venable illustrate how queer coded characters were originally portrayed as villains, while their deaths simultaneously imply that the only natural fate for a queer individual is to die violently and young, and that they must die for the safety of others around them. The perceived immorality of the homosexual is enough to negatively affect not just themself, but all other heterosexual characters whom they share the screen with. These repeated messages are shown through Disney villains such as Scar and Ursula, and again in 2000s dramas

such as *Brokeback Mountain* and *A Single Man*, convincing audiences that the LGBT community should not be accepting of themselves or be accepted by others due to the notion that queerness only leads to misery and violent ends. While the movies listed here only cover homosexual male characters with a sprinkling of lesbian queer coded characters, the Motion Picture Production Code has left a lasting impact on how all members of the LGBT community are represented on screen. Trans individuals are rarely on screen, but when they are they face the same tragedies that queer fictional men face, such as in *Boys Don't Cry*. While every movie listed here provides a comprehensive analysis of how queer coded and openly queer fictional men are treated on screen, censorship under the Motion Picture Production Code has left lasting impacts on the state of representation of the entire LGBT community in film and the way in which those outside of the community perceive them.

Works Cited

A Single Man. Directed by Tom Ford, performances by Colin Firth, Julianne Moore, Matthew Goode, Nicholas Hoult, and John Kortajarena, Sony Pictures, 2010.

Benshoff, Harry. "THE MONSTER AND THE HOMOSEXUAL." *The Monster Theory Reader*, edited by Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, University of Minnesota Press, 2020, pp. 226–40. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctvtv937f.15. Accessed 31 May 2024.

Brokeback Mountain. Directed by Ang Lee, performances by Heath Ledger, Jake Gyllenhaal, Michelle Williams, Anne Hathaway, and Linda Cardellini, Universal, 2006.

Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*. University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Davis, Glyn. "CAMP AND QUEER AND THE NEW QUEER DIRECTOR: CASE STUDY – GREGG ARAKI." *New Queer Cinema: A Critical Reader*, edited by Michele Aaron, Edinburgh University Press, 2004, pp. 53–67. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxcrw2f.11. Accessed 18 July 2024.

Dilley, Whitney Crothers. "Transcending Gender in Brokeback Mountain." *The Cinema of Ang Lee: The Other Side of the Screen*, 2nd ed., Columbia University Press, 2015, pp. 147–57. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/dill16772.15. Accessed 12 June 2024.

Dracula's Daughter. Directed by Lambert Hillyer, performances by Otto Kruger, Gloria Holden, and Marguerite Churchill, Universal, 1936.

Garlen, Julie, and Jennifer A. Sandlin. "CHAPTER ONE: Introduction: Popular Culture and Disney Pedagogies." *Counterpoints*, vol. 477, 2016, pp. 1–24. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/45157183. Accessed 6 June 2024.

Greenhill, Pauline. "'The Snow Queen': Queer Coding in Male Directors' Films." *Marvels & Tales*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2015, pp. 110–34. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.13110/marvelstales.29.1.0110. Accessed 3 June 2024.

*Heart Disease and Stroke Preventio*n. March 2024, https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/cardiovascular/heart_disease/#:~:text=About%20695%2C000%20people%20die%20of,Americans%20have%20a%20heart%20attack. Accessed 18 July, 2024

Lugowski, David M. "Queering the (New) Deal: Lesbian and Gay Representation and the Depression-Era Cultural Politics of Hollywood's Production Code." *Cinema Journal*, vol. 38, no. 2, 1999, pp. 3–35. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1225622. Accessed 18 July 2024.

Moore, Timothy, and Heidi Gollub. "Fatal Car Crash Statistics 2024." *USA Today*, 16 Jan. 2024, www.usatoday.com/money/blueprint/auto-insurance/fatal-car-crash-statistics/#:~:text=There%20are%20nearly%2043%2C000%20fatal,rate%20is%20less%20than%201%25.

Noriega, Chon. "'Something's Missing Here!': Homosexuality and Film Reviews during the Production Code Era, 1934-1962." *Cinema Journal*, vol. 30, no. 1, 1990, pp. 20–41. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/1224848. Accessed 29 May 2024.

Pasulka, Nicole, and Brian Ferree. "Unearthing the Sea Witch." *Hazlitt*, 14 Jan. 2016, hazlitt.net/longreads/unearthing-sea-witch.

Phillips, Wiliam H, *FILM An Introduction*, 2009.

Rich, B. Ruby. “Brokering Brokeback: Jokes, Backlashes, and Other Anxieties.” *Film Quarterly*, vol. 60, no. 3, 2007, pp. 44–48. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.1525/fq.2007.60.3.44. Accessed 12 June 2024.

Suddenly, Last Summer. Directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, performances by Elizabeth Taylor, Montgomery Clift, and Katharine Hepburn, Columbia Pictures, 1960.

The Lion King, Directed by Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff, performances by Jonathon Taylor Thomas, Matthew Broderick, James Earl Jones, Jeremy Irons, Moira Kelly, and Niketa Calame, Walt Disney Pictures, 1994.

The Little Mermaid. Directed by John Musker and Ron Clements, performances by René Auberjonois, Christopher Daniel Barnes, Jodi Benson, Pat Carroll, Paddi Edwards, and Buddy Hackett, Walt Disney Pictures, 1989.

Whitley, David. “Learning with Disney: Children’s Animation and the Politics of Innocence.” *Journal of Educational Media, Memory & Society*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2013, pp. 75–91. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43049666. Accessed 5 June 2024.