PHAM HOANG MAI

THE ART OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN WALT DISNEY ANIMATED FEATURE FILMS

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Instructors: Asso Prof. Hoang Tran Doan
Asso Prof. Tran Duy Hinh

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INTRODUCTION

1. Reasons for choosing topic

Walt Disney is a Hollywood legend. He is the "father" of the renowned Mickey Mouse. He was not only a well-known painter and the founder of Walt Disney Film Studios, one of the major Hollywood film production companies, but also the inventor of amusement parks such as *Disney Land*, *Wonderland*, a place that inspires the dreams and imaginations of generations of children worldwide.

From a tiny film studio founded in October 1923 to the present day, Walt Disney is considered the world's greatest multimedia entertainment corporation, with more than ten entertainment divisions and seven television networks, with a revenue of $65.39 billion (in 2020)[113]. Walt Disney's films, which span the decades from the primetime era with hand-drawn black and white Mickey Mouse to the digital era with blockbusters such as Frozen costing hundreds of millions of dollars (*Frozen*, 2013), are cinematic works of both artistic value (won numerous prestigious film awards such as the *Academy Award*) and great appeal to viewers, particularly young viewers (checked for proof of box office revenue). Not restricted to the United States, Walt Disney's animated films have been distributed and enjoyed popularity in several nations with diverse cultures, ranging from the United Kingdom, France, and Germany to Japan, Korea, and Vietnam.... Walt Disney films are fairy tales that have influenced many generations of children and adults throughout their childhoods, and particularly, the animated characters that Disney created have become classics, with a life beyond the movies. Along with iconic characters such as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, feature animated films throughout Disney's history have established an "empire" of *Disney Princess*, who fascinate children of all ages worldwide, whether it's Snow White, who turns 80 this year, or the new Moana princess, who debuted in 2016. One may argue that the characters' attractiveness is a necessary component of the Disney animated feature films' success. Apart from the "superior" filmmaking skills, there are outstanding screenplays and memorable characters. These are the critical aspects that contribute to Walt Disney's position as the world's premier animated series, with a strong vitality and global reach.

Thus, the issue arises as to why the characters in Walt Disney

animated feature films have such a powerful and enthralling appeal to both children and adults.

To address the above subject, the PhD student selected to conduct research and write a thesis on *The Art of Character Development in Walt Disney Animated Feature Films*. On the hand, understanding, assessing, and evaluating the characteristics that contribute to the allure of The art of character development in Disney animated films; on the other hand, systematizing some fundamental and necessary "recipes" for creating Disney-style cinematic characters. Finally, I believe that my research can be beneficial in assisting some young Vietnamese animators in the future in creating and developing the country's animated feature films.

2. Purpose of the research

- Acquire, analyze, evaluate, and systematize knowledge of the art of character development in Disney animated features.

- Make suggestions for the development and production of Vietnamese animation characters in order to make them more comprehensive and appealing.

3. The object of the research

The research is focused on "The Art of Character Development in Walt Disney Animated Feature Films" as evidenced by the following: Character types and functions; Personality and behaviors; and Expression through acting. All of these features are woven into the narratives of Disney's animated feature films, which are based on myths, folktales, and fairy tales.

4. Research scope

The study focuses on the art of character development in the Walt Disney animated feature films, as seen through some typical Disney animated feature films from each period:

- The period when when Walt Disney was actively involved in film directing and production. (1930-1967);

- The Disney Renaissance (1989-1999);

- The Revival Era (from 2010 to present);

- Some Vietnamese animations based on scripts adapted from short stories or fairy tales.

5. Theoretical basis of the research

The following theories were used in this research:

5.1. The Theory of Character

5.2. Acting Theories for Animated Characters

5.3. A few cinematic theories: Cognitive film theory; Screenplay adaptation theory; cinema narrative theory.

6. Research questions and hypotheses

6.1. Research question

How are the characters in Walt Disney animated feature films developed, and what features do they have that appeal to both children and adults?

6.2. Research hypothesis

- Walt Disney animated feature film characters are created and developed through script adaptation, cinematic storytelling, characterization techniques, and a seamless blend of cinematic language.

- The characters are derived from fairy tales, mythology, and folklore to fit the period and to convey clear ideas and meanings.

7. Tasks of Research

7.1. Systematize some theoretical concerns with character development in literature and film, character development, screenplay adaptation, and cinematic narration style... On this foundation was built aTheoretical system of tools for investigating, analyzing, and clarifying the art of character development in Walt Disney animated feature films.

7.2. Identify the art of character development in Disney animated feature films that are based on myths, folklore, or fairy tales, as well as the style of narration..

7.3. Appreciate the art of character development in Walt Disney animated feature films for its ingenuity and success. As a result, character development in Vietnam animated films is evaluated and identified.

8. Research Methods

8.1. Method of interdisciplinary research (theory of film history, film theory, literary theory, aesthetics, culturology, psychology...). This technique provides the PhD student with an overview of the art of character development in Walt Disney animated feature films.

8.2. Methods of comparative research. The author can analyze and demonstrate the innovation in the art of building and developing

Walt Disney animated feature film characters by comparing archetypal literary characters from fairy tales, mythologies, and so on with those in the adapted script.

8.3. Searching for documents, reading, and viewing movies are examples of specific research activities. Other research operations include assessing, synthesizing, and generalizing the concerns related to the topic.

9. The scientific and practical significance of the thesis

9.1. Scientific significance

- Systematization of some cinematic theoretical issues concerning the of animated characters and their expression through film narration, climax, conflicted, dramatic story told through an adaptation of the original myths, folklore, or fairy tales by generally faithful screen.

- Identify some effective techniques for developing several animated characters in Walt Disney Animated feature films.

9.2. Practical significance

The thesis's research findings can be utilized as a guide for developing and expressing movie characters in general, and animated characters in particular, for composition, teaching, and learning at film schools and other animation production companies.

10. Dissertation layout

The thesis content is divided into three chapters and includes an introduction, research overview, conclusions, references, and a list of published works connected to the thesis.

Chapter 1: Theoretical basis of the study

The major purpose is to provide a theoretical framework for character study and thesis work, as well as other connected topics.

Chapter 2: Walt Disney animated feature film characters, from fairy tales and literature to the screen

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the art of character development in Walt Disney animated feature films that adapted from fairy tales and literature, based on character theories in literature, theater, and cinema.

Chapter 3: Creations and successes in the art of character development in Walt Disney animated feature films

The chapter's main content is to offer evaluations of the success

in developing Walt Disney animated feature film characters, as well as some comments on character development in Vietnamese cartoons.

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH REVIEW

1. A collection of documents on character theory, animated character acting, film narration theory, and screenplay adaptation

-The book *Characters in Fictional Worlds: Understanding Imaginary Beings in Literature, Film, and Other Media* edited by researchers Jens Eder, Fotis Jannidis and Ralf Schneider [56] discusses the fundamental theory of literary characters, cinematic characters, and media forms in the fictitious world of art.

- The character research by Fotis Jannidis: *Character: The Living Hanbook of Narratology*[49] verified that the term "character" is used to refer to participants in tale worlds created by various media, as opposed to "persons" as humans in the real world.

- Jens Eder's study: *Characters in Film: Fundamentals of Image Analysis(Die Figur im Film: Grundlagen der Figurenanalyse*) [54] seeks to discover a common pattern for assessing and comprehending the film's characters.

- Theory of Film Narration (also known as Narrative Theory for Literature) works such as Theory of artistic point of view of scholars Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg [20]; book *Reading People, Reading Plot: Character Progression and The Interpretation of Narrative* [52] by critical theorist James Phelan; or David Bordwell's *Narration in the Fiction Film* [44] – introducing the narrative styles in film, the different conceptions of the theory of narrative theorists and critics like Vladimir Propp, Todorov, Gospel, etc...

- Because Disney Animated Feature Films are primarily based on adapted scripts from fairy tales, legends, short stories, and so on, there are also essential for theoretical, critical, and research works on transformation, such as George Bluestone's *Novel into Film* [50] or Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale* [81].

- Character acting with the famous works of Konstantin Stanilavski (*Creating the role* [65], *Preparing the actors* [66], *Character building* [67]); Ed Hooks' *Animator Acting*, [48]) and Jason Kennedy's *Character Acting: A Case for Better Animation Reference* [53] is another factor that cannot be overlooked in order to create outstanding characters.

- In addition, there are a number of books on character theory

and theoretical issues concerning Vietnamese movie characters, such as *Theory of the Drama* [21] by Tat Thang; *Theoretical issues of Screenplay* [23], by author Doan Minh Tuan; *Narratology: From Classic to Post-Classic* by author Tran Dinh Su [19]...

2. A collection of documentary about Walt Disney's animated feature film characters

- *Good Girls and Wicked Witches: Women in Disney's Feature Animation* [34] and *Handsome Heroes and Vile Villains: Masculinity in Disney's Feature Films* [35] are two books by author Amy M. Davis about gender theory in Disney animated feature films.

- The book series collects research and criticism works on Walt Disney characters in such areas as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and so on. For example, the book *The Curse of Masculiniti" from Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Cult*ure [39] edited by Bell Elizabeth, Haas Lynda, and Sells Laurra. *Diversity in Disney Films: Critical Essays on Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexuality, and Disability* [57], edited by Johnson Cheu, among others...

- Scholar Jack Zipes' studies on fairy tales and folk stories; *Walt Disney: From Reader to Storyteller* [63], edited by authors Kathy Merlock Jackson and Mark I. West... and a smattering of research works by students, PhD students, analytical essays on character lines in certain typical Disney feature films based on V. Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale*[81], Todorov's *Narrative Theory*...

- In relation to the technique of generating and acting as animated characters, Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston's work *The Illusion of Life* [86] has become the animator "handbook" utilized by many generations of animators. Many books, including *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*: *The Art and Creation of Walt Disney's Classic Animated Film* [104] by JB Kaufman, *Walt Disney's Fantasia* [59] by John Culhane, and *The Art of Frozen* [79] by Charles Solomon, John Lasseter, Chris Buck, and others, discuss the technique of creating cartoon characters.

- In Vietnam, there are a number of academic studies on foreign animated films in general, and Disney animated feature films in particular, such as Ngo Manh Lan's *Eighth Art Animation* [10] and the Lac Hong University study group's *The Art of Making Japanese Animation* [26]. *Some Characteristics of a Pixar Animation Fil*m [22].

With the help of the results of the research conducted by domestic and foreign authors on the Walt Disney Animated Feature Film and on Disney's Art of Character Development, this thesis aims to synthesize, succinctly and closely relate to the development of Vietnamese Animation so that Vietnamese animators can draw on their experience and find effective solutions to creative future projects for our country's animation.

9

CONTENT

Chapter 1: THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE RESEARCH
1.1. Basic concepts of character and character building
1.1.1. General definition of character

There are many research lines on characters with various approaches to issues, but one thing they all have in common is that a character is a fictitious person generated from the *image of individuals* and their life experiences.

However, the description offered by German researcher Jens Eder is broader and more specific, as he explains: "characters as *identifiable fictional beings with an inner life* that exist as *communicatively constructed artifacts.* All the properties of such characters are ascribed to them in communication processes as films are manufactured and viewed. p. 18]. The writer selected this character definition as one of the research's "tool" notions.

1.1.2. Film characters and Animated feature film characters
1.1.2.1. Film character

Characters in films are usually the focal point, the people who are picked by the director for his work. At least two characteristics must be present in order to have a good, vivid cinematic character: Characters must always have a specific form, family, and social interactions; characters must have a specific path with a purpose; and characters must be transformed from events, revealing individuality.

1.1.2.2. Animated Feature Film characters

a/ Animated Film

Animated films are likewise a sort of feature film, but they are created by separately recording each image with a specialized recorder and then merging them to generate motion (animate) and a continuous sequence of images.

b/ Characters of Animated Film

Animated Feature Film Characters are cinematic characters made via the use of painting, sculpting, paper cutting, dolls, and computer technology.

1.1.3. A description of the fictional world's approaches to characters, as well as a history of character theory study

Researchers highlighted four key approaches to character research

based on four core hypotheses in *Characters in Fictional Worlds: Understanding Imaginary Beings in Literature, Film, and Other Media* [56, p. 5]. That is to say:

1. *Hermeneutic* approaches view characters dominantly asrepresentations of human beings.

2. *Psychoanalytic* approaches focus on the psyche of both characters and recipients.

3. In contrast, *structuralist and semiotic methods* emphasize the distinction between characters and humans.

4. *Cognitive* theories focus on modeling the cognitive and affective activities of information processing in great detail.

Scholar Margolin provided a "kick" for theorical research in the field of character development based on theory that blends parts of structuralism, cognitive knowledge, and the idea of fictional worlds.

Philosophers like Eaton, Critteden, and Lamarque proposed a philosophical theory of character in which the character is defined as the semi-finished or imperfect being of people in reality [49, p. 4].

1.2. Some theories used in the study

1.2.1. *Character Theory* in Adaptation and Film Narration

The majority of Disney animated feature films are based on fairy tales, folklore, or myths, which is a distinguishing feature. To comprehend the innovation in character development of Disney animated feature films, it is required to study adapted characters in the manner of narration.

In general, Disney characters developed from an adapted film script are relatively loyal to the literary original, consistent with linear storytelling, sinusoidal climaxes, and diverse points of view.

1.2.2. *Cognitive theory* for identification character

One of the most crucial tasks of the audience in a film is to identify the character, sympathize with the character, empathize with the character, and comprehend the film. According to contemporary character theories, the spectator is a factor that contributes to the success of the character and is also an essential component in character identification..

1.2.3. *Acting* Theory

1.2.3.1. Stanislavski's Acting System

Konstantin Stanislavski's acting theory is a theory of theatrical

skills that he established in the early twentieth century primarily for theatrical purposes and subsequently adapted to actor training in general. The five basic concepts of the system he devised are still applicable today and have been the foundation for actor training methods at the world's theater and film universities.

1.2.3.2. Acting Theory by Ed Hooks

Ed Hooks, a renowned acting specialist, puts out the nine key acting principles that explain everything in producing an animated character, including not only the character's movements and other facial expressions for interacting with each other, but also the design of the surroundings [48].

1.2.4. Theory by Jens Eder: *The Clock of Character*

Jens Eder, through the search to discover film characters, came up with a "template" of the Clock of Character used for analyzing the character and its impact on the viewer according to four main characteristics: The Character as *Artifact* ; Characters as *Fictional Being*; Character as *Symbol* and Character as *Symptom.*

Jens Eder's theory of Characters Clock summarizes the main points of the researcher's Character Analysis theories: Simulation; Creativity; Content calculation; Communication, that create identity, liking, sympathy, empathy of the viewer, which elicit the viewer's response to the character, connecting them with the character, creating the success or failure of the character.

Sub – Conclusion of Chapter 1

To approach the topic's goal of studying the art of building Disney feature film characters as well as explaining their attractiveness, the PhD student relied on a number of modern basic theories such as Theory of Characters, Theory of Film Adaptation, Cognitive Theory, and Acting Theory to serve as a theoretical foundation for their thesis and arguments in their research. Furthermore, the PhD student applies Jens Eder's theory Characters Clock provided in The Theory of Cinematic Character Analysis to clarify the following qualities in the construction art: Disney Animated Feature Film Characters:

1/ *Disney characters are flawlessly constructed and developed by the adaptation of the script and the style of cinema narration, which includes the following characteristics*: (1) The modified script's character development is both loyal to the original and

outstanding in its creations; (2) Maintain linear storytelling, using sine wave conflicts to create tension. (3) Diverse perspectives reclaim rich characterization and simple recognition. (4) The character's function, or role, shifts throughout time, adding to the character's and story's appeal.

2/ *The Disney character simulates and clearly displays the imaginaryhuman being in a variety of ways*: The research findings on genuine human personality will be valuable in grasping and accurately describing the traits of fictional characters. The viewer's perception of the character in a movie differs from their perception of the real person. However, the activation of cinema knowledge and the norms of communication between the spectator and the screen assists the viewer in understanding the film's story and the characters in the film. And knowledge of real life is vital in the formation of character stereotypes in the viewer.

The building of fictional characters in Disney animated feature films has outstanding features such as (1) Characters creation suitable for linear storytelling; (2) Characters vary, as do functions and roles, creating vividness and a powerful impression; (3) The characterisation process is broad and rich, with the employment of direct and indirect personification approaches being adjustable; (4) Characters appropriate for the periods and society, national identity, and cultural space; (5) Ingenious and appealing use of music to examine the inner workings of a character.

3/ *Highlight symbol, simple and rich sign to recognize:* Disney characters' simple and obvious symbols leave a lasting impression with simple yet meaningful messages. Moral lessons about good and evil, misery and happiness, failure and success, love and duty are all expressed gently and subtly. Furthermore, Disney characters have visible indications that allow for simple identification, build significant sympathy and empathy between the character and the viewer, and establish a tight connection with the audience through a variety of lively and humorous actings.

Although Disney animated feature film characters have left an indelible impression on viewers, there are always objections to the way Disney Animated film characters are developed: from changes in character adaptation to the simplification of messages sent or the change of the original meaning of literary text, etc. The examination of these flaws clarifies the benefits of Disney's art of creating animated

characters.

Chapter 2: WALT DISNEY ANIMATED FEATURE FILM CHARACTERS, FROM FAIRY TALES AND LITERATURE TO THE SCREEN

2.1. Character Development in Walt Disney Animated Feature Films Using Adapted Screenplays and Storytelling

Walt Disney is the one who introduced spectators to the animated feature film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which was adapted from the narrative *Snow White* (*Schneewittchen*) in the Grimm collection of fairy tales and enjoyed unexpected success. Since then, Walt Disney has won over audiences all over the world and established itself as the world's most famous animation studio, producing animated feature films that are said to be outstanding than the original fairy tales. One of the aspects that contribute to the success of Disney animated feature films is the way characters are developed through film narration and film adaptation.

2.1.1. Adapted script is basically faithful to the original

Disney's animated fairy tales are adapted and produced in a relatively faithfull adaptation, which means that they transposed close to the originals and almost had the same character system, as well as kept the narrative style and most of the events from the original text. This method of adaptation not only demonstrates a degree of faithfulness to the original plot, but also allows the artists to convey their aesthetic and creative ideas for the film's characters.

2.1.2. Characters are built in accordance with the classic linear narrative

Disney characters are designed to fit within a story's linear narrative. As a result, the story begins with the character's aim, then moves on to the knots and turning points that the character must overcome, and finally to the climax, which forces the character to make a decision that unties the knot in order to reach the ultimate result.

In the above linear narrative, the movie's major characters must develop as the situation's leader, always following a "scheme" with a series of knots leading to a climax and finishing with the achievement of the stated aim.

The way the knots appear and untangle draws viewers into the

story, piques their curiosity, creates multidimensional supposition, and sets the stage for surprise as the story progresses from one suspense to another.

The viewers' curiosity, astonishment, and empathy are piqued by the strong link between the many characters' acts, the way they define their goals, and the way they overcome all hurdles to achieve their aims.

2.1.3. The characters have clear, diverse and vivid functions

In a Disney film, each character serves a specific purpose that adds depth to the story. Disney, on the other hand, is very flexible in creating characters with a variety of functions, changing the functions of characters, creating a clear contrast between the protagonist and the villain, reversing the main - supporting level between the characters, and enhancing the role of the villain character in the film more than in the original story to create drama and climax. Walt Disney's animated fairy tales have always had a significant appeal to audiences due to this adaptability.

2.1.4. Generate waveform conflict that follow the linear path of the plot

According to the structuralist Todorov's Theory of Narrative, conventional narratives are structured in five states in order to construct a plot: equilibrium - a shift in the equilibrium - Recognize that the balance has been disrupted - restore the equilibrium once it has been disrupted – re-establish the new equilibrium This dramatic course is invariably followed by the characters in Disney's film stories.

2.1.5. Diverse narrative with many artistic tricks

2.1.5.1. Flexibly change points of view in narrative

Thanks to the flexibly shifted points of view in story, from the narrator in the third and first person to the employment of songs in storytelling, Disney has exhibited a vivid narrative style in the studio's feature animated films, promoting the tale growth.

2.1.5.2. Creating buffers before the climax

There are often pauses or stop-points needed before each conflict to make the story more dramatic. Music and hilarious passages are used in Disney feature animated films to create a buffer space before the climax occurs.

2.1.5.3. The perfect ending meets the viewer's wishes

Most Disney fairy tales have a perfect, happy ending in which

the main character gets his goal and the evil is punished, resulting in the viewer's joy and contentment.

2.2. Character development through characters' design and acting

2.2.1. Impressive characters design

Walt Disney artists have gone beyond simple animation design to create characters with rich, revolutionary looks, a plethora of movements and actions, and a level of uniqueness that rivals live-action films.

2.2.2. Characters with flexible, lively acting

Aside from acting through extraordinarily realistic animation, Disney also knows how to develop beautiful and compelling characters using the "recipe" of acting.

Sub – Conclusion of Chapter 2

Disney's animated feature films based on fairy tales provide spectators with excitement, passion, and good aesthetic emotions thanks to the range of originality in the art of narrative and character construction. The following factors demonstrate this:

1/ The film adaptations are accurate to the literary original, yet they are flexible in terms of character additions and functions, resulting in vividness and appeal for the film's characters. There's also a definite three-act structure in linear narrative with waveform climaxes, which piques viewers' interest and builds suspense. Furthermore, artistic techniques in cinema narration have been skilfully employed, resulting in a variety of appealing viewpoints on the characters in each film.

2/ The film's characters are designed not only to fulfill their theoretical responsibilities and tasks (like the story's protagonist), but also to express themselves clearly, with the ability to switch positions as needed. In particular, the method of creating multi-functional characters resulted in the film plot being presented with a reduced number of characters, making the film narrative clear, successful, and also evoking strong emotions in spectators.

Aside from that, the Mouse family's films have had a lot of success due to the harmonious and creative blend of character development and performance. Walt Disney's characters are vividly presented, creating many interesting impressions through in-depth, closely linked, and logical acting with smooth, natural,

understandable interactions that have a profound impact on spectators, easily identifiable to the viewers, eliciting sympathy, empathy, and positive aesthetic emotions in them.

3/ Furthermore, the use of music and songs in films with content appropriate for the tale, character performance, and film rhythm has generated the essential harmony. Film music reveals a character's personality, inner feelings, and emotions on the one hand, and the dramatic events, contradictions, and conflicts in the film on the other. All of this creates the required thrill and aesthetic enjoyment for viewers to share feelings, sympathy, and empathy with the people and circumstances in the film.

Through the foregoing analysis, it is possible to comprehend and explain "Why is the way of film narration and character development in Disney animated feature films able to fascinate and "bewitch" not only children but also adult spectators?"; "How has Disney developed into a powerful 'witch,' the leader in the field of animated feature film production?" since its inception until now.

Chapter 3: CREATIVENESS AND SUCCESS IN BUILDING WALT DISNEY'S ANIMATED FEATURE FILM CHARACTERS
3.1. Fictional characters are built vividly and realistically

Disney animated feature films contain imaginary characters who vividly and accurately resemble humans and represent the sociocultural environment of the time period. Disney characters are inextricably interwoven and harmoniously coordinated in order to make the film's story simple to follow and appealing.

3.1.1. Disney's cinematic characters are fictional creations with distinct personalities, characteristics, and life objectives.

A distinguishing element of early Disney animated films is that the protagonists and antagonists have distinct personalities; good and evil are clearly defined, although the character arrays shift significantly in the later time. The audience no longer notices the sharp contrast between the two lines of good - evil (primary - villain) characters, but rather the process of character development that results in the film's characters resembling actual people and being more genuine. As a result, the film's characters become more relatable to the audience.

3.1.2. The humor of Disney characters

The creative process additionally, Disney's movies characters captivate viewers for another reason. The humor is in the manner in which the character is formed. This is a required component of Disney animated feature films' "menu." The characters' wit in Disney feature films acts as an invisible thread that connects viewers to the film's story.

3.2. Simulations of characters appropriate for the era and society, for national identity and cultural area

What makes Disney's fairy tale adaptations so appealing to audiences is that the characters are always replicated and developed in line with the times, infusing them with the vitality of contemporary social life.

3.2.1. The change in gender perception reflects social progress

Following the path of historical development, the portraits of Disney characters, including female characters, male characters, and villains, have undergone significant alteration, shifting in terms of gender viewpoint, and reflecting the social advancement of the times.

This modification enables viewers to more easily identify with the characters, empathize with them, and comprehend the film.

3.2.2. Characters created in racial, cultural and social diversity

In an era with advanced technology and a developed entertainmen business, Walt Disney's ambition is to capture the worldwide market through cultural and racial diversity. This is accomplished in Disney animated feature films with characters of various skin tones and races.

3.3. The messages conveyed by the characters and the film's story are straightforward, obvious, and simple to comprehend

Walt Disney's animated feature films are always loaded with symbolism, creating a lasting impression on both children and adults.

Disney film characters transmit unmistakable messages of friendship, love, and familial affection, all of which are addressed gently, naturally, and emotionally.

The aforementioned qualities, together with a fluid and dynamic plot, are the primary components that contribute to the attraction and enchantment of Disney films.

3.4. The process of character development is diverse and rich,

utilizing a variety of approaches

Apart from linear narrative, Disney's animated feature films use a top-down characterization method. From the start, the characters created and developed through the basic pattern of fairy tales are clearly split between good and evil. This clarity aids viewers, particularly children, in identifying characters.

3.4.1. The top- down characterization's process

The top-down technique to character development, which involves fitting characters into pre-existing stereotypes, creates a sense of intimacy with them, making them approachable, recognized, and compassionate.

3.4.2. Indirect characterization process

The ideas, inner feelings, exterior look, personality, and features of the characters are continuously introduced in Disney animated films through the comments and reactions of other characters. This technique allows for dynamic flexibility in the manner in which the tale is told, thereby engaging the audience.

3.4.3. Utilize music to establish the moods and emotions of your characters

Music is a significant component of Disney films; it is used to describe the characters' inner feelings as well as to create a space and environment in which the characters can express their inner feelings; it assists viewers in clearly identifying the characters, quickly comprehending the film circuit and character actions; it establishes a close connection between the characters and the viewers; it elicits spectators' emotions and sympathy for the character; and it serves as a companion to the character.

3.5. Disadvantages in Disney's character creation

Although the Walt Disney animated feature film series has consistently dominated the global animated film market, garnering countless accolades and numerous awards for the script, director's work, music, and character creation, the series is not immune to criticism and conflicting analysis, centered primarily on two issues:

1. Disney's animated feature films have altered and distorted the source material, resulting in false messages and educational implications.

2. Disney's animated feature films contain simplistic, submissive and racist character models, with the majority of the white princesses serving as the main protagonists.

3.5. Discuss the successes and challenges in creation of Vietnamese cartoon characters

Vietnamese animation also has many short films adapted from historical legends or folklore such as *Tales of Ong Giong* (1970), *Son Tinh - Thuy Tinh* (1972), *Au Co and Lac Long Quan* (1980) etc... ; Short animated films adapted from fairy tales or folklore such as *Thach Sanh*, *The bamboo with hundred sections*...; The film is made from the legends of Vietnamese ethnic groups such as *Dam San*, the *Hero Dam Rong*; Film made from fables such as *The Catfish and the Toad* (1993),ect... Besides, everyday stories with Vietnamese way of life and behavior are also exploited by animation filmmakers . There are also a number of successful animated short films such as *Kittens* (1965) by director Ngo Manh Lan, adapted from the short story *Tet of a Kitten* written by Nguyen Dinh Thi, or the movie *Cricket 's Adventure* (1980) by director Truong Qua, adapted from a famous long story with the same name of writer To Hoai, etc..

Most films adapted from Vietnamese fairy tales, fables or short stories are characterized by faithful adaptations, which can be said to be "*literal adaptations*", that fit to the classification of literary adaptation mentioned by the author Louis D. Giannetti. Viewers have no reason to complain about the film's substance and cannot accuse the filmmakers of misrepresenting the original, as the film is preserved almost entirely intact, from the characters to the plot, details, and narrative (*The bamboo with hundred sections , Cricket's Adventure* ect ...). However, with this method of rigid adaption and lack of flexibility, the image appears to be illustrating the original material (*An Duong Vuong and My Chau - Trong Thuy*), the film is devoid of humor, drama, and climax. (*The Catfish and the Toad, The bamboo with hundred sections*) The adaptation lacks the original's vitality and realism (*Cricket's Adventure*), As a result, despite the directors' best efforts, the Vietnamese adapted animated films are less appealing, leaving spectators with little impression.

However, Vietnamese animators and fans were introduced to two 3D animated films in 2011: *Under the Tree* and *The Little*

Match Girl. Although the authors of these two films are not yet professional award-winning filmmakers, they have infused their drama with significant appeal. These films, in particular, adhere to Todorov's structural narrative theory, which may be used to assess the success and failures of character development and the authors' narrative art. These shining examples not only serve as a catalyst for the growth of the animated film genre, but also serve to bolster confidence in the future of Vietnamese animation.

Sub – Conclusion of Chapter 3

Through a detailed examination of the art of character development in Disney animated feature films, this chapter demonstrates why Disney's animated feature film characters have left such lasting impacts on viewers' hearts. The fundamental attributes that endow personalities with the ability to fascinate viewers stem from:

1/ The characters rather vividly replicate imaginary entities, which allows viewers to see themselves in each film character. This has a number of pros and cons, the most important of which is that the film characters are as active as real life individuals. Characters evolve with each step. As culture and society evolve, so do Disney film characters. As a result, audiences will always identify with and admire the film characters.

2/ The messages and lessons acquired by the characters are very natural and straightforward, not dogmatic, boring, or stiff. Through their interactions with the film's characters, viewers gain life experiences and teachings about nature, family, parents, brothers... about courage, about goodness and evil, and so on...

3/ Walt Disney produced vivid and convincing characters through a variety of character development techniques, leaving a lasting effect on viewers. Walt Disney cartoon characters frequently transcend the confines of film, being beloved by all generations, both children and adults.

Although there are some who criticize Disney animated films for failing to adhere to the original or for using racial discrimination when creating characters, the studio is always attentive to criticism and constantly changes, improves, and maintains the world's first position in the field of animated feature film production.

According to analyses of Disney animated feature films, Vietnam-

ese cartoons have seen numerous favorable developments in recent years. Numerous films are based on scripts adapted from fairy tales or short stories by great writers. These films generally demonstrate their ideals and are well-received by both children and adults. Young Vietnamese animators have also made significant efforts to acquire and develop their skills in order to create high-quality, artistic animated films that fulfill the expectations of viewers. *Under the Tree* and *Little Match Girl* are also examples of this. While significant limits remain, these are also encouraging indicators for Vietnam's animated feature films.

CONCLUDE

Disney's animated feature films based on fairy tales captivate and delight audiences. They are similar to the way sounds echo from a familiar world, evoking in the viewer "pleasurable memories and new ideas, is like prolonging the myth that lies at the origins of our being and does not cease to intrigue us and give us force." [70, p. 61]

1/The allure of Disney's film adaptations is that the filmmakers, working with well-known fairy tales, have created cinematic artworks with fresh, close, and vivid renditions, enticing spectators to experience and appreciate. The allure of Disney adaptations is largely due to the studio's filmmakers' ability to create adapted characters while retaining the basic plot framework, omitting or altering unnecessary details, adhering to a linear narrative, and developing characters with distinct, diverse, and adaptable functions. Following that, these film adaptations constantly establish a contrast between the character arrays that drive the conflicts and climaxes, piquing the viewers' interest and desire to learn more. Finally, Disney has an independent artistic and technological expression that allows it to create its own brand of animated feature films, eliciting strong emotions in viewers through images that are similar to what they imagined, as well as content that interests them and new discoveries they have never encountered. While there are critics of the studio's film adaptations, it is undeniable that Disney has always been a powerful "witch," the undisputed leader in the field of animated feature film production, enchanting and "charming" not only children but also adult viewers since the company's inception to the present day.

2/ Based on fundamental theories and contemporary research on fictional characters (literature, film, television, and video games), four major qualities for character analysis have been proposed: (1) Imitation of the human being; (2) Creativity in character design; (3) Symbolism in character construction; (4) The character's structured sign establishes a link with the viewer. Combining all aspects of character development such as script adaptation, narrative, acting, and character design with cognitive theory, the research has presented the fundamental characteristics of the art of character building, as well as the successes in character development

of Disney animated feature films, which contribute to the characters' attraction to the viewer. Consists of:

The first is that cinema adaptations be loyal, adaptable, and vivid to the original, ensuring that all of the key elements such as storyline, characters, and drama are there to create story continuity. The majority of film stories are based on fairy tales; nevertheless, the characters' personalities, look, and behavior vary according to culture and society, making it easier for viewers to identify them.

The second is a three-act linear narrative with a waveform conflict that steadily grows until the last peak before ending, capturing the audience's attention and producing interest, surprise, and enjoyment. The flexibly changing points of view make the characterization process more vibrant, allowing the audience to interact with the character and easily follow the story's growth.

The third point is that character functions are obvious, but they alter over the story. Characters in the plot who serve one (or more) functions and provide cross-references. The characters' interactions are harmonious, vibrant, and unified.

Fourth, the characterization process is broad and rich, frequently working from top to bottom to establish typical character patterns. However, as the corporation grew, there was a shift in how the character's personality was represented. In the early time (1937-1969), the evident kind of good - evil character line was replaced with a blend of good - bad in the same character, creating characters that were closer to people in society and thus had a better level of authenticity.

Fifth, during the studio's creative process, the principal characters in Disney animated feature films have undergone significant changes. Female characters are becoming more active as feminism progresses. Instead of waiting for a "white horse prince," they pick their own fate. They are no longer female characters in the film (especially in the early stages) because they are too tranquil, lack fighting spirit, do not know how to defend themselves, and so on. These drawbacks have been substantially improved in recent films, demonstrating Disney's agility, timeliness, and ongoing evolution.

Sixth, comply with the acting steps given by acting theorist Ed Hook and with the methods of creating cartoon characters built by genuine from the first days of acting cartoon characters. Disney is

lively, funny and rich. As early as 1937 when making the movie *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Disney came up with a method of creating cartoon character personalities to help animated characters have distinct personalities expressed through appearance, dialogue, and actions. Because of their actions, behavior, and how to interact with other characters, the audience can easily identify and empathize with the characters. The high anthropomorphization of the animal characters makes up the appeal of every Disney movie animal character.

Seventh, Disney animated pictures have a distinct"synchronized sensation" achieved by effectively blending sound and vision.

For the audience, music is an unending source of inspiration. It clearly depicts emotions and feelings, as well as the purpose of life of the characters, establishing a subtle yet profound link between the audience and the characters.

Eighth, Disney characters are culturally diversified, providing viewers with remarkable experiences as well as clear messages about good and evil, love, family devotion, friendship, objectives and aspirations to find greatness. Lessons are given figuratively so that the audience can learn on their own terms.

Ninth, Disney animated features are criticized for character stereotypes, too dissimilar adaptations of original content, or wimpy female characters...etc. However, these drawbacks have been solved in recent films and are always altering with Disney's improvement.

3/ Based on the findings of research and analysis on how to develop characters in Disney animated feature films, the study examined the advantages and disadvantages of Vietnamese animated films through a variety of typical films in order to make recommendations for Vietnamese animators to consider. It can be seen that there have lately been a number of films with substantial changes in the method of script adaptation, character development with vivid and dramatic storytelling, excellent character performance, and a harmonic mix of music and pictures that are appealing to spectators. Movies like *Little Match Girl*, *The Legend of the Pieu Scarf*, and *Straw's Scarecrow*, among others, have provided encouraging signs for the future growth of animated feature films.

LIST OF PUBLISHED RESEARCH WORKS RELATED TO THE THESIS BY THE RESEARCHER

1. *Character building and narrative in the 3D Vietnamese animated film Little Match Girl*, Journal of Theatre and Cinema Studies, No. 12 (12/2016), pp.88-92 and No 13 (3/2017), pp 80-84
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3. *Ed Hooks' theory of animated film acting and its application to the analysis of the movie Kittens,* Journal of Theatre and Cinema Studies, No. 16 (12/2017), pp.52-58
4. *Outline of Adaptation Theory.* Journal of Theatre and Cinema Studies, No. 18 (6/2018), pp.66-71
5. *The national cultural identity expressed through some Vietnamese animated movies,*Journal of Culture and Arts, No.410 (8/2018), pp.79-81.
6. *Walt Disney Animated Feature Film: Analysis of the "The Little Mermaid" Film Adaptation.* Journal of Theatre and Cinema Studies, No. 19 (9/2018), pp.45 - 52
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9. *The allure of music in Disney animated feature films*. Journal of Culture and Arts, No. 419, (5/2019), pp.67- 69.
10. *The inspiration of two Vietnamese animated films: The Legend of the Pieu Scarf and the Straw's Scarecrow.* Journal of Theatre and Cinema Studies, No.22 (6/2019), pp.47-50