



A STUDY OF THE PEDIGREE OF POSITIVE SUPPORTING ROLE IN DISNEY PRINCESS ANIMATED MOVIE**Mengsi Wu**

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Abstract

The plot is one of the elements of the content of narrative literary works. The process of character-centered events in narrative literary works is organized by causal logic by a set of specific events and conflicts that can show the relationship between people and people and the environment. Disney princess animation draws on the narrative model of Hollywood movies. Set hero save the United States as the theme of the movie. In the protagonist and the supporting role of the supporting protagonist to promote the story, the positive supporting role is often presented funnily and excitingly to become more ups and downs. Throughout the centuries-long evolution of Disney's animated films, from the white snow-white singer of the last century, the princess Moana is now dark and dares to fight. Disney has created a variety of princess characters. When people gather their eyes on princesses, they have found that they are pushing their plots to develop "little people" images. Some of them have been with the protagonist side, with the protagonist's birth, death, and shared prosperity; some suddenly appear when the protagonist is most helpless to turn things around, while others are difficult to temper the princess. While spectators want to become princesses, they also want to possess these supporting characters in awe-inspiring styles and can give them extraordinary power. The folk culture, historical background, and ideological trend written by these "positive supporting groups" affect every generation in the world. The supporting role of the front supporting character in Disney's animated films has received increasing attention.

Keywords: Disney Princess; Animated Movie; Positive Supporting Role; Plot.**1. Introduction**

Known as the "illusion of life," Disney animated films occupy American animated films' central position. Its unique "Princess" has been known to every family. Disney princess animated films based on local folktales and protagonists are female. Female protagonists like princesses who have pure royal blood similar to Elsa and Anna in "Frozen," like Princess Diana who become princess civilian when she married a prince in "Princess and green frog"; the daughter who saved the village and the daughter of general who saved the country are crowned "princess" by Disney Company for their charming personalities. These attractive female characters form the group of "Disney Princess." The Disney princess animated films described in this paper mainly study the films starring the officially crowned Disney Princess published on the official Disney website, that is, from the first Disney princess animated film "Snow White" in 1937 to "Moana" in 2016, and the 13 princess animated films launched by Disney Company. However, the film's sequels are not included, such as "Cinderella 2", "The Little Mermaid 2" and so on.

As the birth of the first classic Disney princess animated film, "snow white and the seven dwarfs," the development of Disney film's characteristics has grown up under the Hollywood system and has been deeply influenced. The princess animated films in the classic Hollywood period are characterized by "typification." Most of them are about love stories between a princess and a prince. The princess, gentle and kind, met the brave Prince. After defeating the evil wizard, they would live happily together. "Snow-white," "Cinderella," and "The Little Mermaid" all unfold in this mode. "Classic Hollywood" under the "merger movement" in the 1960s was transforming into "New Hollywood."

Hollywood movies in the United States were transformed, with the new ways of the overall narrative, type evolution, and integration. Nevertheless, during this period, the Disney Company appeared a bottleneck due to the social and economic depression caused by World War II. In 1966, Walt Disney passed away, which made the Disney Company in an unprecedented predicament, and its creation stopped for a time. After ten years of growth and transformation, in the 1970s, based on "New Hollywood," Hollywood ushered in the era of "digital Hollywood." With the development of digital technology, Hollywood movies have become a spectacle, scientific, and cartoonish. Disney made great success in 1989 and then launched "The Little Mermaid," which used computer software coloring technology, reducing many production processes. Besides, the princess's image was reformed, making the image of the female figure in the classic Hollywood period change into a rebellious one. In the classic Hollywood period, the princess was always waiting for the Prince's rescue, and her state was changed to be active to pursue love, which was deeply fond by the audience. After reviving creative form and content, Disney has launched more and more wonderful princess animated films. Under the background of continuous innovation in the digital era, Disney princess movies have been continually innovating in audio-visual effects, narrative methods, theme selection, and other aspects. The transmutation of each character's image proves Disney's animation text and technology's double progress and jointly creates Disney's brilliant achievements.



2. The Supporting Role

2.1 The Definition of Supporting Role

Supporting role has been recorded neither in *Cihainor* in *Ciyuan*, but its three meanings can be found in *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (edited by the dictionary editing Office of the Institute of language, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the 99th printed edition of the commercial press in 1998). In performing arts, the term "supporting role" refers to the co-performance of a play, all of which play the leading roles. "The story describes mass production movement in liberated areas," "The White-haired Girl" and "A Dream of Red Mansions" are examples. The male and female protagonists are called supporting roles; that is, the male and female protagonists who co-play in a play are called supporting roles. Secondly, it refers to the secondary role in artistic performance: the people often say "work under someone" and "play an unimportant role." Thirdly, from the latter meaning, people associate with the big stage of social life and use "supporting role" to refer to people who do extra work or secondary work.

2.2 An Overview of Supporting Role Image

Animated film supporting role has not been clearly defined. However, the animated film belongs to the scope of the film, so the definition of an animated supporting role can take the definition of supporting role in the film into consideration, that is: supporting role mainly refers to the non-main role in the film and drama, the object or person appearing as a foil and prominent auxiliary role in the performance. From this point of view, the animated film's supporting role refers to the living person or thing except for the protagonist. Although the concept of animation supporting role is similar to that of the film supporting role, they cannot be utterly equivalent because of their essential differences. Like Emil Cohl's point of view, the film's essence is to record, reproduce and restore reality and record the real characters, scenes, and other things through the lens through the director's arrangement. However, animators can create anything and any plot they want to present on a piece of white paper or a screen, which is an entirely virtual creative process. The supporting roles can be divided into positive ones and negative ones by distinguishing their characteristics. The negative supporting role refers to evil forces in the film. Some of them are ferocious in appearance; others are kind in appearance but vicious in the heart. The queen in "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" is jealous of Snow White's beauty and wants to kill her. In "Cinderella," Cinderella's stepmother and her two daughters are selfish and vain under their beautiful appearance. At the end of the film, Cinderella is trapped in a dark room by her stepmother, making Cinderella almost miss the chance of meeting the Prince. Morrison, the witch in "Sleeping Beauty," Shan Yu, the Hun leader in "Mulan," and Prince Hans in "Frozen" are all famous supporting roles. Their evil nature makes them less widely recognized and loved than positive characters. Nevertheless, their roles in the film are indelible. While they try their best to create contradictions and conflicts, the pure and beautiful moral characters of the positive roles are reflected more brilliantly. The development of the plot has also become exciting under their promotion.

The positive supporting role is opposite to the negative one. Some of them are always around and accompany the protagonists, while others suddenly appear at the critical moments to help the protagonists tide over the difficulties and conquer all kinds of audiences with their unique charms. They always put their representative personality into full play. "It is better to please the hearts of others with simple actions than to bow one's head and pray." Gandhi's words express the artistic purpose of the positive supporting role image. For example, in "Snow White," each of the seven dwarfs represents a unique personality: Doctor, Bashful, Sneezey, Sleepy, Happy, Dopey, Grumpy. Their names are their personality. They play their personality to help Snow White through the difficulties. They make the story full and vivid with exaggerated, concise, and formal modeling and behavior. At the same time, they bring unlimited fun to the audience. Disney has created more positive supporting roles while creating a variety of princess roles. Some of them have been accompanied by the protagonists, share weal and woe. Some suddenly appear in the protagonists' most helpless time and turn the tide. While the small audiences want to become princesses, they also want to have charming and cheerful supporting roles that give them extraordinary strength. These "positive supporting actors" have made outstanding achievements on Disney's stage and brought considerable profits to Disney. More and more attention has been paid to the creation of positive supporting roles in Disney animated films.

3. The Pedigree of Positive Supporting Roles in Story Morphology

The term "Pedigree" has a long history in China, of which concept originates from the traditional Chinese "Genealogy." It is an integral part of genealogy theory, emphasizing the population system constructed by the family's blood relationship. There is a saying in *Sui Shu Jing Ji Zhi II*: "The people who see what they see today are regarded as the pedigree chapter," highlighting the significant role of genealogy in recording the development of clan lineage. GUI Youguang, an essayist in the Ming Dynasty, wrote in *Madam Zhu Zheng's 60th Birthday Preface*: "as for the 400 years, the genealogy is endless". Gu Yanwu, a scholar of the Qing Dynasty, wrote in his book *Brothers of the Same Clan Are Living in Huangmen Cemetery* notes: "The name goes down in the annals of history, and the genealogy comes from deceased father." In modern times, Zhang Binglin, a great master of Chinese culture, also discussed the genealogy in *Refuting Kang Youwei's Theory of Revolution*: "There is no great difference in culture and language. The genealogy of *Shiben* still lies in the historians. If they say that they are familiar with shangguo, they will return to their original names. Can Manchuria be discussed with them?". Since modern times, with the influx of western culture, the definition of "Pedigree" has gradually evolved from the family kinship, which has become a language to explain the system of species change. In Western civilization, pedigree, as the structural basis of species genetics, connects the family production chain's genetic variation process.



During this process, pedigree emphasizes the similarity of individuals in change and development rather than the identity of origin, which means that there are both similarities and differences among members of the genealogy. The positive supporting roles of Disney Princess animated films are rich and colorful, but throughout the story, each play's positive supporting roles also have their universality and individuality. It seems that the positive supporting roles of each category will appear in their way in each film. We should make a detailed and in-depth analysis of the characters' pedigree of these positive supporting roles to understand how they perform their functions in each play.

4. The Enlightenment of the Vladimir Propp

Most of the Disney Princess animation comes from folklore, and the folklore behind attracting the public is to cater to the universal values of the public—taking good for evil, defeating the strong with the weak, being rescued from survival. Goethe once said: “morphology is supposed to gain its legal status which takes the things that are widely discussed in other disciplines as its main object, collecting those scattered things, and establishes a new angle from which people can easily observe natural things.”. Propp, a famous contemporary folklorist, who refined the universality and the functionality of the characters of folk fairy tales, puts forward the morphology of stories based on Goethe's morphology of plants and bones. In his pioneering work, *The Morphology of Stories*, he deduced, summarized, and interpreted 100 magical stories from Afanasiev's stories collection. He found that no matter the endless variable stories, the basic framework remains the same, just like the rhythm of poetry and the formula of opera, which is “dancing with fetters.” “Fetters” is the story's content, and dance is how animators make the plot around the main content to create. As early as 50 years ago, a famous Swiss folklorist, Max rutty, said: "the role of fairy tales in children's lives and the role they played in the thousands of years of adult life without written records make us more convinced of the hypothesis that fairy tales are a special form of literary creation involving people.”. ①the “particularity” of fairy tales lies in its unique narrative structure which defines the stylistic features of “folk fairy tales.” When children are listening to it or reading it, a stylized decoding method can be used to meet the expected demand. ②During the research process of studying “story morphology,” Propp found that all magic stories have "determining factors" and "variable factors” in which there can be different characters doing different things. However, in each story, the functions of the characters are the same. Propp found that these "functions" have a significant repetition rate. He took these functions as the skeleton, set up a story's form, and summed up 31 functions. Disney Princess animation mostly comes from folk magic stories. When we put these functions into the study of Disney Princess animated characters, we will also find that some folktales' functions can be realized by multiple characters, and some characters can have several functions. This just reflects the status quo of Disney Princess Animation: on the one hand, it has a hundred flowers in full bloom, and on the other hand, it is the same.

4.1 Function theory of characters -- Frozen

The thirty-one functions proposed for the characters are at the heart of Propp’s “storymorphology.” A function is a character's behavior defined in terms of its meaning to the course of action. The thirty-one functions have four laws at the same time. First, the character's functions act as a stable element of the story, and they are not dependent on who performs them or how they are performed. They form the basic building blocks of the story. Mysterious Stories have a limited number of available features. The order of function items is always the same. 4. All magical stories are of the same type, according to their composition. Each feature has a number, a function description, a definition, and a corresponding code. However, not every story has full thirty-one features. Some features are missing, and we use the word “o” in the feature description. By combining Disney Princess animated films and the overall grasp of the development process of Disney Princess animation, the author finds that Disney animated films in the context of Hollywood are closely related to the development trend of Hollywood. From the birth of the first Disney princess animated film Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, in 1937 to Sleeping Beauty's birth in 1959, all the animated princess-themed films shot by Disney during this period are Disney princess animated films in the classic Hollywood period. Starting from The Little Mermaid in 1989 to The Princess and the Frog in 2009, Disney's animated princess films are in the period of digital Hollywood. Starting with 2010's "Tangled" so far, the Disney princess animated film shot in the new decade for the digital Hollywood period, and the latest one is 2016's "Moana." Frozen is analyzed in terms of the 31 features provided by Propp and the rules they imply.

Table 1: Function of Animated Movies

Function item number	The function description of the animated film "Frozen."	Definition	Code
1	The King and queen were killed at sea.	Departure	e
2	Elsa shut herself up in the room and did not want the magic to touch Anna.	Interdiction	6
3	Elsa opened the castle gate at her coronation.	Violation	b
4	When Hans saw Anna, he accidentally inquired about the status of Anna and her sister Elsa.	Reconnaissance	B
5	At the dance, Hans and Anna communicated closely, and Hans learned about Anna’s strained relationship with Elsa.	Delivery	III



6	Knowing that Anna and Hans would have a flash marriage, Elsa got angry and showed magic. Forced by the lords and ministers, Elsa fled the castle because of fear.	Trickery	Г
7	Anna gave Hans temporary control of the castle and the country, and Hans waited for an opportunity to gain control of the kingdom	Complicity	G
8	o	Villainy	A
9	Christopher accompanied Anna to find Elsa	Mediation	B
10	o	Initial resistance	C
11	On the way to find Elsa, they met Olaf, who yearned for summer, and they set foot on the road to find Elsa.	Departure	↑
12	Under Olaf's guidance, they find the palace of Elsa.	1 st donor function	Д
13	Anna was so happy to see Elsa that she wanted Elsa to come home, while Elsa wanted to stay in the palace that she had made	Hero's reaction	Г
14	Elsa saw Olaf, the symbol of "true love." The stone beast elf gave Anna a cure.	Receipt of agent	Z
15	The male protagonist took Anna to see the stone beast elf to find a way to cure Anna. In the effort of the stone beast elf, they had a crush on each other.	Spatial change	Я
16	Hans took troops to find Elsa. Soldiers of Weston Duke were battling against Elsa.	Struggle	Б
17	A lamp made of ice fell from a height and broke	Branding	K
18	Anna went back to the castle with the help of the male protagonist and Olaf	Victory	Π
19	Anna went back to Hans, and a kiss of true love will save Anna's life.	Liquidation	Л
20	Anna returned to the castle and Hans, waiting for Hans' kiss of true love	Return	↓
21	Elsa, who was cheated and locked in the house with seriously injured Hans, was executed.	Pursuit	Πρ
22	Olaf appeared and helped Anna escape	Rescue	С π
23	Kristoff found Anna, and Anna found Elsa	Unobserved arrival	X
24	Hans deceived Elsa, saying that Anna was killed by her, trying to distract Elsa's attention and prepared to stab Elsa with a sword	Unfounded claims	Φ
25	Anna, who blocked Hans' sword and saved Elsa, turned herself into an ice sculpture	Difficult task	3
26	Anna was rescued by melting her frozen heart out of love	Solution	P
27	Elsa overcame her fear and turned the cold winter back into spring	Recognition	Y
28	Hans was punched into the water by Anna.	Exposure	O
29	Asha used magic to make the whole kingdom warm and friendly.	Transfiguration	T
30	Hans was repatriated, and the Duke of Weston was dismissed	Punishment	H
31	o	Wedding	C*

As can be seen from the above three Disney princess animations' character function table, the story is unfolded from these 31 functions. In the case of necessary logic, functions are also connected in series; that is, the former function can lead to the latter function. A large number of functions appear in pairs. For example, there is "interdiction" to "violation of interdiction",



“reconnaissance” to “delivery”, and “struggle” to “victory”. Some functional items are arranged in groups, such as interdiction, violation of interdiction, reconnaissance, delivery, trickery, complicity, and villainy, which constitute an opening. Simultaneously, there are some separate functional items, such as departure, wedding, and so on.

4.2 The Action Circles of the Positive Role in Disney Princess Animations

These function items constitute an animated movie, in which the implementers of the function items are roles that correspond to the function items. Vladimir Propp divides this into seven action circles: 1. The villain includes villainy (A), struggle (B) and pursuit (Πp); 2. The donor includes the first donor function (Д), receipt of the agent (Z); 3. The helper includes spatial change (Я), liquidation (Л), rescue (Сп), solution (P), transfiguration (T); 4. The princess or prize, and often her father, includes departure (e), difficult task (3), branding (K), recognition (Y), exposure (O), punishment (H), wedding (C*); 5. The dispatcher includes mediation (B); 6. The hero includes departure (↑), hero's reaction (Γ), and wedding (C*); 7. The false hero includes unfounded claims (Φ), departure (↑), and the hero's reaction (Γ), which are generally negative compared with the hero's behaviors.

Table 2: Description of movies with their role

Film Title	Production Year	Positive Supporting Roles			
		The Donor	The Helper	The Father	The Dispatcher
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs	1937	The Seven Dwarfs	The Seven Dwarfs and birds and beasts in the forest	The King	The Hunter
Cinderella	1950	The Fairy Godmother	The mice Jaq and Gus, the dog Bruno, the bird, and the horse	Cinderella's father, the King, and the Grand Duck	Absent
Sleeping Beauty	1959	Flora, Fauna, and Merry weather	Flora, Fauna, merry weather, the horse Samson and birds and beasts in the forest	King Hubert, King Stefan, Queen Stefan	Absent
The Little Mermaid	1989	The Prince's servants	The dog Max, the carb Sebastian, the clownfish Flounder, the seafowl Scuttle, the minister Green the housemaid Carlotta and other animals	King Triton and other mermaids	The carb Sebastian, the clownfish Flounder, the seafowl Scuttle
Beauty and the Beast	1991	The candle Lumiere, the clock Cogsworth, Mrs. Potts, Madame de Gard robe	The candle Lumiere, the clock Cogsworth, Mrs. Potts, Madame de Gard robe, the teacup chip, the dog, and other vessels in the castle	Belle's father	Belle's horse



Aladdin	1992	Genie	The tiger Rajah, the monkey Abu, Magic Carpet, and Genie	Jasmine's father	Genie
Pocahontas	1995	Grandmother Willow	The raccoon Meeko, the hummingbird, and Thomas	Pocahontas's father	The raccoon Meeko
Mulan	1998	Fa family ancestors	Cri-kee, Mushu, the horse Khan, Yao, Ling, and Chien Po, the Emperor	Mulan's parents and grandmother	Mushu
The Princess and the Frog	2009	Mama Odie	Ray, Louis	Princess Diana's father and mother	Absent
Tangled/Rapunzel	2010	Absent	Pascal, Maximus, Tavern villain	Father and mother of Rapunzel	Absent
Brave	2012	will-o'-the-wisp	Three bears, Merida's white horse	Merida's father and mother	will-o'-the-wisp
Frozen	2014	Olaf Stone Beast Elf	Olaf, reindeer	Father and Mother of Elsa	Absent
Moana	2016	Moana's Grandmother	Maui, Ocean, Rooster Hanhan, Goddess of Nature-Tefiti, Chief Tui, Sina	Moana's Father and Mother	Ocean

In this way, we can see that this story can be divided into seven action circles, and three situations will occur when the characters are arranged in them: 1. The action circles can accurately correspond to the characters, such as the Fairy Godmother in "Cinderella" corresponds to "the donor" rather than any other functions. 2. A character exists in multiple action circles. For example, Olaf in "Frozen" exists in several action circles, such as "the donor," "receipt of an agent," and "rescue." 3. On the contrary, there are still exist such occasion that one action circle correspond to several roles. For example, the hero always appears in multiple action circles. Upon closer inspection, we can see that the frontal supporting roles are everywhere. In addition to connecting the storyline and setting off the heroes, they are distributed in multiple action circles, mainly in the donor, the helper, the princess or prize, and often her father and the dispatcher.

5. Conclusion

After analyzing thirteen Disney Princess animated films, the positive supporting roles are generally above four action circles. Therefore, we see that every action circle has its corresponding laws. The positive supporting role in the donor's action circle appears to help the protagonist at a critical moment because of the protagonist's kindness. The dwarf gave Snow White a place to stay during the asylum; the Fairy Godmother used magic to give Cinderella a perfect outfit for dinner; the Prince's servants dressed Ariel in human-appropriate costumes; the vessels of the Warm Castle provided Bell luxurious feast when she was imprisoned, etc. During the period of three-dimensional animation, audiences are increasingly demanding the authenticity of the film's visual and narrative aspects. As a result, the magical power and teaching effect of the donor became smaller and smaller. It is often through the protagonist's own efforts to overcome difficulties and obstacles after the donors remind.

As shown in the chart, we can also see that the helpers are usually "small figures" around the protagonist. Some of them are animals, some are vessels, and some are characters. They are weak, but in large numbers, and they accompany the protagonist. In "The



Little Mermaid," Ariel came to the human world from the bottom of the sea. However, the little animals who have been with her on the bottom of the sea will always be by her side despite difficulties and obstacles. Also, Snow White has always been accompanied and assisted by dwarfs; Cinderella has mice and birds to make dresses for her and seize the keys; Olaf and the reindeer are a solid alliance of Princess Anna who seeks to rescue her sister and find true love; the sea and Rooster Hanhan is inseparable from Moana and Maui when they are looking for the Goddess of Nature——Tefiti. The protagonist amuses the positive supporting actors under "the helper" action circle, and at the same time, help the protagonist to tide over the difficulties with their unity.

Under the father's circle of action are the protagonist's father and his father's relatives in the film. The father represents the "guardian." As men, they are the dominant of ethics and norms in the film. The sprout of the princess's sense of adventure in the film is also traceable, which is influenced by the fact that the father's patronage and shelter breed their potential male consciousness. Ariel challenged the Mermaid King's authority and surfaced many times to spy on the human world under the prevention of her father. When the Mermaid King fights Ursula for Ariel's safety, we can understand where Ariel's character genes come. Bell's father was an invention lover. He had all kinds of immature inventions in his little room, which echoed Bell's personality of love reading and accepting new things. In "Brave," Merida's father showed a brave spirit for protecting his family in front of the evil bear and was named the "King of Scotland" by various tribes. When Merida inherited her father's bravery, she integrated her mother's reason into character shaping. She showed the wisdom and strategy behind her bravery when she tried to help her mother——a bear turned by the witch escaping from her irrational father who had lost his mind with the mission of hunting and killing bears. She not only saved her mother but also won the recognition of various tribes.

Under the dispatcher's action circle is a positive supporting role that introduces the protagonist into the main topic of the story. The hunter releases Snow White and informs her of the dangerous situation, so Snow White comes to a small village close to the dwarfs on the way to escape, so the story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs begins. After Bell's white horse informed Bell's father of the dangerous situation, he took Bell to the castle of the beast, and the magical story of Belle and the beast began. The wildfire brought Merida to the witch, who turned her mother into a bear. Dahai chose Moana and brought Tefiti's heart into her hands. Under the guidance of the dispatcher, the protagonists began their adventure. Nevertheless, sometimes not every movie has a dispatcher, or the dispatcher's dispatch function is small and can be ignored.

In the frontal supporting actor pedigree generated by the action circle derived from Propp's "Character Function Theory," the frontal supporting actors under each action circle have their functions corresponding to the action circle. In addition to the narrative aspect, the positive supporting role plays a vital role in the film that cannot be underestimated.

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