

Fall 12-2016

From Eric to Tarzan: An Ethical Analysis of Lead Male Characters in Disney Animation Films Produced During the Company's Renaissance Era

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FROM ERIC TO TARZAN: AN ETHICAL ANALYSIS OF LEAD MALE
CHARACTERS IN DISNEY ANIMATION FILMS PRODUCED
DURING THE COMPANY'S RENAISSANCE ERA

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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December 2016

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With the proliferation of mobile devices and wireless Internet, mediated content continues to become a large part of every child's emotional and social experiences. Content such as this becomes moral teachers as children grow and learn how to live and act in society. Noting that media texts can serve as one source of such modeling, this study questions the manner in which children's media model ethical behavior to young audiences. Specifically, this dissertation employs Vogler's 12-step Hero's Journey to identify the portrayal and development of ethical perspectives in lead male characters of Disney animation films during the company's Renaissance Era (1989-1999). Examination of these portrayals occurs to uncover an understanding of the ethical modeling Disney conveys to young boys as they develop their own codes of ethics. This study uncovered three categorical themes in Disney animation films produced during the corporation's renaissance era: virtuous heroes, anthropomorphic deontologists, and supporting roles of virtue. These thematic categories provide three types of ethical modeling via social learning to young male viewers. According to the results, Disney provides children with good natured programming. This allows Disney to become a positive "teaching machine" used to shape a child's perception of reality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Father God, thank you for giving me the wisdom and strength to complete this dissertation and doctoral program. I am truly blessed beyond measure by everything you have provided for in my life and for my family. I give all the glory to you. Amen.

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving wife and family. Katelyn, without your unconditional love and support, I could not have completed this journey. You were there for me on those tough nights, and continued encouraging me throughout the program. You served as my inspiration and I can never thank you enough. To my one-year-old son, Arco, you were born right in the middle of completing this study, but God had a plan. Watching these films as a father shed a different light on the analysis and provided me with a completely different perspective. You will never remember these days, but always remember I did this for you. To my parents, Ken and Anita, you always taught me to dig in and work hard. My academic career would never have happened without your love and support. Thank you for always being my positive role models.

Thank you Dr. Stiegler for serving as my dissertation chair and advisor. Without your guidance and mentoring, I never would have finished this project. Thank you for sticking with me and caring about my work as much as I did. To my committee members, Dr. Jay Start and Dr. Mark Piwinsky, thank you for believing in me, even as an undergrad. Your words of wisdom and encouragement will never be forgotten. Your input and feedback strengthened this study.

Lastly, I would be remiss not to thank my fellow members of Cohort 5. What a crazy ride. However, I could not imagine experiencing it with a different group of people. Thank you all for your words of encouragement, hard work, and honest friendship. You all became my family away from home on those long class weekends and I could not have done it without you.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

With the proliferation of mobile devices and wireless Internet, mediated content continues to become a large part of every child's emotional and social experiences. Throughout the course of their lives, children will observe many models of ethical behavior performed by family members, community members, and/or fictional characters. These models become teachers as children grow and learn how to live and act in society. With that, children are more likely to imitate those with whom they share identity characteristics, such as gender, age, or cultural ethnicity (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, it is more likely that a child will imitate a model of the same gender (Perry & Bussey, 1979). This identification occurs when a child observes an action, belief, or value from a model and adopts it as their own.

Noting that media texts can serve as one source of such modeling, this study questions the manner in which children's media model ethical behavior to young audiences. Specifically, this dissertation employs Vogler's 12-step Hero's Journey to identify the portrayal and development of ethical perspectives in lead male characters of Disney animation films during the company's Renaissance Era (1989-1999). Examination of these portrayals occurs to uncover an understanding of the ethical modeling Disney conveys to young boys as they develop their own codes of ethics.

Statement of the Problem

Disney began as a small cartoon studio in 1923; by the mid-1930s, Mickey Mouse was an international celebrity (Wasko, 2001b). However, from the early 1970s to the late 1980s, Walt Disney Productions failed to maintain financial stability. In the decade spanning 1989 to 1999, Disney experienced resurgence in popularity commonly referred to as the company's

Renaissance Era. Continuing today, Disney maintains a legacy of successful, full-length feature films, as the company has grown into an international producer of children's media.

Some parents use Disney's wholesome entertainment as a babysitter of sorts (Hannon, 1997). The youth of society learn about themselves, their relationship to others, and the larger world through the observation of popular culture. Stories teach children, as well as entertain them (Lang & Ford, 1965). Moreover, media and broadcast technologies have created a new education environment through new forms of public pedagogy – teaching and learning that occur through digital spaces outside the traditional educational classroom (Giroux, 2004). Giroux and Pollock (2010) state Disney has a didactic effect on children. The company's animation films are “teaching machines” used to shape a child's perception of reality. This prolonged exposure to constant imagery and ideology may have a powerful effect on children, an impact that Walt Disney himself recognized:

Story-wise, we sharpen the decisive triumph of good over evil with our valiant knights – the issues which represent our moral ideas. We do it in a romantic fashion, easily comprehended by children. In this respect, moving pictures are more potent than volumes of familiar words in books. (qtd. in Kurtti, 2010)

Because of this influence, the importance of questioning Disney's supposedly “innocent” media becomes apparent.

Disney products have become synonymous with childlike innocence and wholesome family entertainment (Giroux & Pollock, 2010; Hannon, 1997). Ward (2002) identifies the importance of studying Disney due to this “desire to provide family entertainment – entertainment that is not morally offensive” (p. 4). Yet, Wasko (2001a) describes the notion of Disney movies providing wholesome, unbiased, and ethically virtuous entertainment as a cultural

myth. This appears as research continues to reveal how Disney portrays identities of gender, culture, and ideology (see for example, Davis, 2006,2013; Hannon, 1997; Hoerrner, 1996; Lieberman, 1972; May, 1981; Orr, 2009; Ross, 2004; & Tonn, 2008). Most of the research to date focuses on the effects these films have on female viewers and their perceptions of gender. This leaves a large gap in the body of available research. Davis (2013) agrees that when researching Disney animation films, researchers must examine the male characters of these stories as well as the females. The following question will thus serve as the research problem: What ethical perspective do the lead male characters personify in Disney animation films from 1989-1999?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine Disney animation films produced from 1989-1999 to uncover ethical motivations of lead male characters for the reason that these portrayals provide modeling examples for young boys. At this stage in the research, an ethical perspective will be generally defined as a moral view in accordance with the rules and standards set forth by the individual's definition of right and wrong. The morally right or wrong action depends on the perspective held by the individual person.

Significance of the Study

Abundant research is available on the gender messaging embedded in Disney movies, cartoons, advertisements, toys, and books. However, little research exists on the ethical frameworks used by the company when creating their characters. Children iconize characters within Disney, which in turn provide a model of what is right and wrong to young audiences. To children, they become observational models of learning. This didactic effect imposes Disney's definition of ethics onto children in society. Therefore, it becomes important to study the ethical

perspectives of characters due to their indirect ability to act as possible “teachers” of morality to children.

Research Approach

This dissertation applies a qualitative research method as a procedure to provide a deeper understanding of ethical frameworks portrayed in Disney animation films produced during their Renaissance Era. In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state, “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3). Creswell (2013) defines qualitative research as “the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p.44). Moreover, the qualitative approach is a process of research that takes philosophical assumptions and interprets them into a procedure that involves the studying of social or human problems. This dissertation begins by observing the ethical perspectives of lead male characters in Disney films while in their natural setting, and interprets them to illustrate the potential impact it may have on a child’s moral development – a social and human problem.

Several factors influence the qualitative rather than quantitative approach to this study. First, the research question stated above insinuates an interpretation of character. Schreier (2012) defines meaning as something that the recipients “attribute to the words that we hear or read, to the images that we see” (p.2). In this study, the researcher observes the actions and listens to the words of lead male characters in ten different Disney films. Then the researcher identifies, by definition, the ethical framework in which the character best fits. Furthermore, meaning is not standard, but constructed by each individual. A person’s background, experiences, or education may shape their interpretation of a given case. This is different from

the standardized meaning of terms or observations that humans from any background automatically understand. For example, if the study were on identifying the number of female versus male characters, a quantitative study would best be suited due to gender having a highly standardized meaning.

A second factor is the exploratory nature of the analysis. This study employs an ethical analysis as a systematic approach to uncover the theory behind the moral decisions made by lead male characters in Disney animation films from 1989-1999. The exploratory nature lies within the potential problem that cannot be clearly defined. By identifying the ethical frameworks portrayed by characters, the study can begin to uncover the type of behavior Disney is potentially modeling to young children.

The third factor for choosing a qualitative methodology is the natural setting of data collection. During this style of research, it becomes important to collect data from the site where participants experience the problem or issue (Creswell, 2013; Hatch, 2002; Lecompte & Schensul, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). The films in this dissertation provide a learning environment for children; therefore, it is beneficial to observe the films in the same context that children would. In this natural setting, the researcher collects the data directly from the DVD releases of the films.

A fourth factor influencing the research design is the use of the researcher as a key instrument (Creswell, 2013). The researcher collects data through examining documents, observing behavior, and/or interviewing participants (Hatch, 2002). For this dissertation, the researcher collects data through examining films and observing character behaviors within them.

The fifth factor is due to the complex reasoning through inductive and deductive logic. In qualitative design, researchers build patterns, categories, and themes as the study progresses

(Creswell, 2013; Hatch, 2002; Lecompte & Schensul, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). The inductive process compiles a comprehensive list of themes that evolve during the data collection process. Deductive thinking occurs as researchers crosscheck themes with the data. Therefore, this form of complex reasoning is better suited for qualitative research.

A sixth factor of influence comes from the emergent design of qualitative research. Simply stated, there is no definite timeline or initial plan for research (Creswell, 2013; Hatch, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). The process may shift after the study begins and data is collected. Research questions, collection methods, and themes may alter as the analysis progresses. Qualitative research focuses more on uncovering the problem than the method used to obtain the information. In this study, the use of qualitative research provides an understanding of the ethical framework these characters portray or if Disney, knowingly or unknowingly, uses reoccurring patterns of moral development.

Therefore, these six factors — the interpretation, the exploratory nature of the analysis, the sources of information, researcher as the key instrument, complex reasoning, and the emergent design of the study— make a qualitative methodology the most suitable for this study. For the purpose of this dissertation, the researcher applies a case study as a comprehensive research approach that follows a content analysis methodology.

Case Study Approach

This dissertation applies a qualitative collective case study approach to provide an in-depth analysis of ten different Disney animation films. Yin (2009) defines this approach as the research involving the study of a case within a real-life environment, context, or setting. Baxter and Jack (2008) view case studies as a way to explore a phenomenon within its natural setting.

Creswell (2013) identifies case studies as a qualitative research approach in which the researcher examines a real-life case, or cases, over time.

Data collection involves in-depth analysis of content from multiple sources of information. Creswell (2013) identifies case studies as both instruments and methodologies. He explains that a person chooses a qualitative approach “because a problem or issue needs explored” (p. 47). This dissertation utilizes a comprehensive case study approach that employs a content analysis methodology.

Content Analysis

There are many forms of data collection methods available within qualitative research. For this dissertation, the researcher uses a qualitative content analysis (QCA) to analyze the data and interpret its meaning. Researchers may apply the QCA to verbal or visual data. Traditionally, scholars used it to analyze documents, such as court transcriptions, newspapers, and letters. Today, they use it to interpret visual media such as television, film, and other screened media, as well as traditional documentation. The QCA is systematic, flexible, and reduces unnecessary data. According to Schreier (2012), the systematic process of a QCA should follow the following sequence:

1. Decide on a research question
2. Select your population
3. Develop a coding frame
4. Divide the material into units of coding
5. Test the coding frame
6. Evaluate and revise the coding frame
7. Conduct the main data analysis

8. Interpret and present findings

Steps 1, 2, and 8 are true for all research methods, however, the remaining are specific to the QCA (Schreier, 2012). The coding frame must be consistent to remain reliable. The check and recheck process assures quality in the analysis and reduces the margin of error. This flexibility is the benefit of the QCA.

The coding frame will always tailor to the material. Validity of the QCA lies within the flexing of the QCA as the categories accurately represent the research questions. Lastly, the QCA reduces data within the study. Instead of opening the study to all aspects of the material, it focuses on selected aspects. For example, in this study, the researcher is not concerned with the women in the films, only the men. This reduces the data significantly by only focusing on a piece of the material instead of the entire movie.

Just as with its quantitative counterpart, a qualitative content analysis requires a codebook (Buddenbaum & Novak, 2001). In contrast to a quantitative codebook, a qualitative design leaves space in the codebook for notes to recognize the concepts or rationale behind each categorization. When analyzing the content, coding assigns segments of data to categories within a coding frame. At its core, the coding frame of a QCA is the key to a clear and concise study (Schreier, 2012). This systematic description of material breaks down information into categories.

Buddenbaum and Novak (2001) identify four steps to follow when conducting a qualitative content analysis. The first step is to examine and reexamine the observational materials; know the ins and outs of the content and its characteristics. Then key words or symbols serve as the reference point for data analysis.

The next step is to use the established codes to sort through data collected and develop subsets of information (Buddenbaum & Novak, 2001). All sub-categories should contain similar properties. This allows the researcher to begin developing emerging themes and/or patterns during the interpretation stages. Whether organizing by hand or by computer software, this step serves to organize the material for the data analysis process.

The third step is to determine the prevalence or frequency of the coded categories (Buddenbaum & Novak, 2001). Begin by searching for key terms or characteristics that bind the materials together. This occurs after the researcher creates subcategories and makes notes about the emerging patterns found during the study.

Lastly, the researcher makes connections between content characteristics developed within the coding frame (Buddenbaum & Novak, 2001). In this dissertation, the researcher will look for similar ethical frameworks that emerge throughout the narratives.

Study Organization

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the research problem and purpose of the study. This chapter begins to provide an overview of the problem and how the research will contribute to the larger body of available literature. In Chapter 2, the literature review provides a deeper interpretation of the ethical perspectives and theoretical concepts used within this dissertation to construct a solid foundation on which this study is built. It focuses on a theoretical justification for the study: storytelling's impact on identity development, media as a storyteller, how society may be cultivated from television, and how media provide models of observation to children. Chapter 2 also introduces five ethical frameworks that a character portrays and the Hero's Journey which serves as the observational points of the study. Chapter 3 details the methodological approach of this study, including a

discussion of data collection, coding characteristics, data analysis, reliability, and validity. The findings of the study are presented by movie in Chapter 4. Lastly, Chapter 5 provides the final discussions, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this review of related literature is to facilitate an overall understanding of the use of ethical and theoretical frameworks that this study employs to demonstrate how young boys may develop their moral code through the consumption of Disney films. The review begins with an overview of the Disney Renaissance Era and its impact on the company's legacy followed by a discussion on the power of storytelling, how overexposure to televised media cultivates behavior, and a brief look into Social Learning Theory to describe how children learn from the screened media that they view. Next, an overview of the ethical frameworks used in this study provides a definition of the categories characters portray. This chapter then finishes with a brief narrative on the hero's journey and its application in this dissertation.

The Disney Renaissance Era

The Disney Renaissance Era is a period from 1989 to 1999 where the company experienced a resurgence of popularity in their animated films. During this decade, the company produced ten animated feature films: *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *The Rescuers Down Under* (1990), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), *The Lion King* (1994), *Pocahontas* (1995), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), *Hercules* (1997), *Mulan* (1998), and *Tarzan* (1999).

The Disney-Formalist period (1937-1942) established the high quality and innovative animation style of film people have come to expect from Disney (Pallant, 2011; Watts, 1997). *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* (1937), *Pinocchio* (1940), *Dumbo* (1941), and *Bambi* (1942) established Disney as a high quality producer of animated films (Pallant, 2010). From 1950 to

1980, Disney transitioned from a simple film studio into a global corporation. However, their films during this time never reached the popularity of the company's earlier films (Pallant, 2011).

After the death of Walt Disney in 1966, the company fell on hard times (Pallant, 2011). Financially, the company was up and down, never returning to the high point of success they experienced during the Formalist period. Even with the success of the animated movie, *The Fox and the Hound* (1981), writers criticized Disney for their lack of innovation and their tendency to resort back to their early animation styles (Maltin, 1987).

In the early 1980s, the Disney Company embarked on a new direction, restructuring the management team that would bring them into their most successful age since the formalist period (Pallant, 2011). After the new team was in place, the company began to bounce back economically. In 1983, Disney's total revenue was at \$2 billion. By 1998, it rose to \$10 billion. After posting a net income of \$97 million in 1984, this figure rose to around \$700 million in 1989 (Wasko, 2001).

The Renaissance Era sparked a revival of Disney excellence. Over time, the company continued to see an increase in box office performance throughout the 1990s. Some movies performed better than others, but together, they brought Disney back into its iconic status within the industry. Today Disney is a global media giant. With all the changes in technique and delivery, one thing remains constant in Disney films: the art of storytelling.

Storytelling's Influence on Children

The narrative paradigm proposes that storytelling permeates all meaningful human communication (Fisher, 1984; 1987). Humans are storytellers from many different backgrounds and disciplines (Rowland, 1989). Narrative is found in all cultures, and all cultures share stories to entertain and educate. The education aspect may consist of traditional school learning, or

leaders may teach youth about the customs and moral values within their society. Today, the mass media dominate American society, with television serving as the primary storyteller (West & Turner, 2007).

The narrative paradigm is not genre specific. Even electronic communication creates episodes in the story of life (Fisher, 1985). In today's society, most people gather information from mediated sources instead of social interaction. Therefore, mediated sources have the power to alter one's sense of reality (West & Turner, 2007). Text messages, emails, and social networking are popular methods of communication driven by portable devices. Moreover, portable technology such as laptops, tablets, and smart phones make most forms of screened media such as movies, television shows, and interactive video games perpetually accessible. This transportation to a mobile village, the internet's shift to mobile accessibility, has strongly influenced society's mediated environment (Stiegler & Artman, 2016).

However, screened media may have an adverse effect on children, as such media compete with parents, families, and teachers to influence a child's developmental growth (Comstock and Scharrer, 1999; Singer & Singer, 2012). Media have the power to grip child audiences with the use of bright lights, loud sounds, and quick scene transitions (Bickham, Schmidt & Huston, 2012). Gleeson (2011) describes film as an especially powerful medium due to the effect it has on two of the five major senses: seeing and hearing (see also Ward, 2002). When a production company releases films to the home video market, it gives children repeatable access to the movies, "which are more emotionally and psychologically involving than much of television" (Comstock & Scharrer, 2012).

West and Turner (2007) state people are more persuaded by a good story than a good argument. Schrag (1991) notes children are more persuadable than adults. In addition, screened

media provide one potential avenue through which children learn behavioral patterns, value systems, and the rightness and wrongness of actions (Lieberman, 1972). Children find role models in media, through which they learn societal traits such as how to dress, ways to act, and character (Valenti, Brown, & Trotta, 2000). Therefore, these production characteristics, coupled with a strong narrative, provide a powerful vision of what morality should look like to children.

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation Theory refers to television shaping the viewers' conception of reality (Gerbner & Gross, 1972). It predicts and explains the effects that prolonged exposure to media messages have on the shaping of viewers' perceptions, understandings, and beliefs about the world that they inhabit (Harris, 2004; West & Turner, 2007). According to Gerbner, Gross, Jackson-Beeck, Jeffries-Fox, & Signorielli (1978) "We live in terms of the stories we tell – stories about what things exist, stories about how things work, and stories about what to do – and television tells them all through news, drama, and advertising to almost everybody most of the time" (p. 178). Gerbner believed that mass communication, and television in particular, cultivate a conceptualized reality of what the real world looks like. He noted that people watch TV religiously, sometimes more than 7 hours a day (Gerbner, 1998; Gerbner & Gross, 1972). Today, TV viewing has gone down to around 5 hours a day, although video viewing has generally increased due to digitally native content in addition to TV-produced content (Nielsen, 2013, 2013). Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hulu are all examples of companies that produce content designed for streaming purposes. Programs broadcast from these subscription-based video on-demand (SVOD) providers allow audience to access them anytime, anywhere, provided they have Internet access. As of November 2014, 40% of American homes had access to an SVOD service (Nielsen, 2014). Of that 40%, 13% boasted to having more than one SVOD service. On

average, a household with an SVOD service watches nearly 50 minutes more than a traditional TV home.

To advance the theory that mediated reality causes a cultivation of an audience's sense of reality, West and Turner (2007) identified three assumptions of cultivation theory (p. 409). Assumption one posits that TV is fundamentally different from other forms of media. It is ageless in a sense that viewers watch TV from the early stages of life through to the end. Because of its accessibility and availability to almost everyone, TV provides one of the most popular and diversified forms of media (Gerbner, Gross, Jackson-Beeck, Jeffries-Fox, & Signorielli, 1978).

The second assumption notes that TV shapes society's way of thinking and relating (West & Turner, 2007). It does not have the power to directly persuade an individual, but it does provide content and imagery from which audiences cast judgment on and draw conclusions (Gerbner & Gross, 1972). Take the concept of news framing, for example. News framing theory states that people interpret information about the world around them as the media presents it (Goffman, 1974). Therefore, the audience only received the information gathered and organized by the news broadcast. Audiences then formulate decisions and opinions based on how the TV segment delivered the content. Instead of taking in the news firsthand, the TV shapes their way of thinking and relating.

Lastly, the third assumption is that the influence of TV is limited (p. 409). Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli (1980) use the Ice Age Analogy.

Just as an average temperature shift of a few degrees can lead to an ice age or the outcomes of elections can be determined by slight margins, so too can a relatively small

but pervasive influence make a crucial difference. The ‘size’ of an ‘effect’ is far less critical than the direction of its steady contribution. (p. 14)

Though the individual impact of televised media may vary, the impact is nonetheless present and substantial moving as slowly as the coming of an ice age (West & Turner, 2007).

Mainstreaming and resonance make up the two-step process needed for cultivation to occur (West & Turner, 2007). Mainstreaming is the tendency for viewers to perceive specific cultures as similar to the way media portrays them via stereotypes (Gerbner, 1998). For example, all people from the south lack intelligence, all politicians lie, and all Asians excel at math. Social reality is cultivated for these viewers, denying them hope of building a better life. On the contrary, resonance occurs when someone’s lived reality coincides with the one portrayed on television.

Cultivation theory serves as one possible explanation as to the importance of this study. The more time children spend watching TV, the more likely their perception of the real world will reflect what they see portrayed (Signorielli, 2012). Therefore, to understand the impact of these media messages, mediated content must be studied to uncover the underlying themes hidden within the narrative.

Social Learning Theory

Socialization is the way people within a culture build their beliefs, customs, arts, and/or traditions. These culture-building efforts are also responsible for the ongoing process of educating the youth within the group. Children grow and discover their identity through observing the behavior and interactions of families, friends, teachers, and others in the community. However, Bandura (1969) posits that while family can provide general outlines of

identity, they cannot always serve as the primary source of modeling through different stages of social development.

Bandura (1962) refers to this growing process as social learning. Perhaps the most famous example of observational learning and the act of imitation was the “Bobo Doll Experiment” conducted by Bandura, Ross, and Ross (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961). In this landmark study, the researchers sought to investigate if social behaviors such as aggression could be acquired by observation and imitation. The sample consisted of 36 boys and 36 girls between the ages of three and six years old. First, the children were pretested to discover their aggressiveness based on four five-point rating scales. Then, the children were matched based on their previously rated levels of aggression. The groups were then further subdivided by gender, separating the boys from the girls. The Bobo Doll experiment consisted of three stages.

Stage one served as the modeling stage (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961). In the aggressive group, children were led into a room containing toys and a Bobo Doll. After letting the children play on their own for ten minutes, an adult would enter the room and attack the Bobo Doll in an aggressive manner, hitting with a hammer and throwing the doll into the air. In the non-aggressive group, the adult entered the room ignoring the Bobo Doll. Lastly, in the control group, no adults entered the room and the children were left to play with the toys and the Bobo Doll on their own with no model of observation.

During stage two of the experiment, the researchers led the children into another room containing more toys (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961). As soon as the children began playing with the toys, the researcher told the child they could not play with the toy because they wished to reserve them for the other children. The point of this stage is to arouse aggression in the children.

Stage three tested for delayed imitation (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961). The next room the researchers brought the children into a room that contained more toys, some aggressive (rubber mallet, dart guns, and Bobo Doll) and some non-aggressive (tea set, crayons, and a plastic farm set). The children were left to play for 20 minutes and observed through a two-way mirror. Researchers recorded responses every five minutes giving each child 240 response units.

Results showed children who observed the aggressive model imitated more aggressive response than those of the non-aggressive and the control groups (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961). In addition, children in the non-aggressive male observation model showed significantly less aggressive behavior than both the control group and the non-aggressive female model. The results suggest that children may imitate aggressive as well as non-aggressive behavior. These findings led to the development of social learning theory.

Social learning theory is the learning process that occurs via observation, imitation, and/or modeling of behavior (Bandura, 1977). Though initially developed as a byproduct of studying violent media models, social learning theory also affects the development of social norms, customs, and ideologies (Harris, 2004). There are three scenarios where observational learning occurs: a live model, a verbal instructional model, and symbolic model (Bandura, 1977). This study focuses on observational learning through the symbolic model of film. Bandura (2004) states a significant portion of one's growth is learning behavioral processes through the vicarious observation.

According to Bandura (2001, 2002), observational learning is managed by four stages: attention, retention, production, and motivation. During the attention stage, observers must be paying attention to what is happening around them for learning to occur. In this study, children must be paying attention to the movies for them to alter their sense of reality. Any distractions

may prevent observational learning from occurring. Retention is the ability to store information after symbolically encoding and recreating observed events. Influence cannot happen if the person cannot remember, or more importantly, reconstruct the event. Production occurs when the retained symbolic conceptions translate into performance of the observed behavior. Lastly, for observational learning to be successful, a learner must be motivated. Reinforcement or punishment may act as motivation for repeating or ceasing the behavior. For example, a child may receive a gold star in elementary school for completing an assignment. This reward may motivate other students to complete their homework on time as well. Conversely, if a parent verbally reprimands a child for physically harming their sibling, this punishment serves as reinforcement that the action observed and reproduced is a negative behavior.

Social learning theory uses reciprocal determinism to analyze behavior (Bandura, 1978). This refers to the three factors that influence behavior: behavior, cognition, and environment. The behavior itself is something the user may or may not retain. The cognition factor is an individual aspect to behavioral learning. Moreover, one's personality and cognitive factors play a large role in whether or not the learner understands the action or behavior. Lastly, environmental factors are the people, family or otherwise, surrounding the learner. The setting influences the behavior by rewarding or punishing the learner for the action. These three characteristics influence and are influenced by one's self and society.

Media and Social Learning

Bandura (1965) conducted another Bobo Doll style experiment using film as the model of observation. He hoped to determine if children would imitate behavior observed via screened media. The study consisted of 33 boys and 33 girls ranging in age from three to six years old. The children were assigned randomly to three different experiment groups containing 11 of each gender. They were individually brought into a room where the experimenter informed the child that she had some

work to do before she took the child to a surprise playroom. In the meantime, they were told they could watch a television program. The five-minute film contained imagery of an adult aggressively playing with a Bobo Doll (e.g., punching it, sitting on it, and pummeling it with a rubber mallet). The final scene of the film differed among the three experiment groups. In the first, the model received a gift for aggressively interacting with the doll, the second received punishment, and the control group received no consequences.

After watching the film, the experimenter moved the children into a playroom containing a Bobo doll, three balls, a mallet and pegboard, art guns, cars, plastic farm animals, and a doll house equipped with furniture and a doll family (Bandura, 1965). Then, the experimenter left the room claiming to return with more toys. The study found that, the children in the punished experiment group imitated less acts of aggression than the other two groups.

After ten minutes of playing, the experimenter brought children juice and sticker books to use as positive incentives (Bandura, 1965). They told the children that for each imitated response from the film, they would receive more juice and a sticker from the sticker book. After hearing this, the number of imitated responses increased across all three experiment groups. However, the children in the punishment group imitated far less response than those of the other children.

As previously stated, children have access to more media than ever in today's society. Moreover, media can serve as a source of observational learning. For example, the symbolic stimuli may involve real or fictional characters that media such as books, television, and film present to young audiences (Bandura, 1977). In the case of this analysis, the observation occurs through the viewing of Disney animation films.

Wright (1986) notes that although mass media lack the persuasive impact of interpersonal communication, media socialization contains its own seductive capabilities that occur through observational learning. Zipes (1986) agrees that children are "socialized or culturally

conditioned by movies, television programs, and the stories they read or hear” (p. 186).

Leftkowitz and Huesmann (1980) propose that children imitate behavior learned from television the same way they learn social and cognitive skills from parents, siblings, and other members of society.

No one piece of media can change or alter a person’s way of life (Huntemann & Morgan, 2012). However, the accrued experience of media viewing shapes and modifies a child’s identity. If a child can imitate behavior learned from screened media, then the importance of ethical and moral development becomes apparent. Before discussing the dynamics of moral development however, it is necessary to define the specific ethical frameworks that are central to this study, and to survey existing research on children’s media and moral development.

Social Learning and Moral Development

There are a few studies available that focus on media and their potential impact on children’s moral development. Carr (2006) explored how films may potentially impact a person’s understanding of morality. Binnedyk and Schonert-Reich (2002) conducted a study in which the *Harry Potter* books could be used as a symbolic representation of moral development in pre adolescents due to relatability of the characters. Sherer (1998) studied how the gaming industry can influence morality, concluding that video games have the ability to positively influence moral development.

Social learning is an additional factor in which children can develop their code of ethics. Bandura and McDonald’s (1963) experimental research asked children to make a moral judgement based on stories that they read. The results concluded that social reinforcement does produce substantial changes in a child’s moral development, illustrating the power that modeling can have on shaping moral behavior.

Media Ethics

In today's multimedia culture, ethical awareness is a necessary part of flourishing and survival as technology evolves faster than the ability to investigate its ethical impact on society (Drushel & German, 2011; Pojman & Fieser, 2011). Since the modality of portable media and the onset of globalization, it is important to be able to quickly distinguish the difference between right and wrong. If Disney movies have the ability to convey social and cultural information, they can also convey ethical information. However, the development of moral education differs throughout global cultures, as do definitions of ethics and ethical behavior. In a broad sense, ethics are a person's guidelines for living their life. However, since culture, society, religious groups, ethnicities, or employers construct these codes of conduct, they differ from person to person (Wilcox, 2013).

Ward (2002) defines ethics as the "systematic study of morals and values" (p. 7). Pojman and Fieser (2011) define it as a "branch of philosophy that deals with how people ought to live, with the idea of the Good, and with concepts such as 'right' and 'wrong'" (p. 2). The definition of ethics posed by Judith A. Boss (2011) is particularly useful for this dissertation. As Boss (2011) argues, ethics is a term used to "refer to a set of standards of right and wrong established by a particular group and imposed on members of that group as a means of regulating and setting limits on their behavior" (p. 5). This definition best serves this dissertation due to its broad application to assess right and wrong by the individual person, or in this case, the character within the films.

To understand the larger body of ethics, one must draw connections between the three subdivisions – descriptive morality, moral philosophy, and applied ethics. Boss (2011) identifies descriptive morality, also known as descriptive ethics, as the method in which to discover and

describe the moral beliefs of a society. Pojman and Fieser (2011) refer to descriptive morality as the moral principles or values a culture abides by. Moreover, these are the customs and traditions that differing societies practice.

Aristotle claimed that the pursuit of the good life is one of the most sought after actions of a man (Boss, 2011). Moral Philosophy, also known as philosophical ethics, examines the guidelines followed by a person, and evaluates them based on universal principles and concerns. Moral philosophy identifies the systematic process used to understand and justify moral concepts and theories (Pojman & Fieser, 2011). It also analyzes the concepts of right, wrong, and permissible.

Lastly, applied or normative ethics focuses on the moral outcome of specific situations (Pojman & Fieser, 2011). Applied ethics serves as the guidelines to right and wrong and tell us how we should act in certain situations (Boss, 2011). An example of this is the Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) Code of Ethics. This code serves as the guidelines for how professional electronic journalists should operate (Rtdna.org, 2015). Their first obligation is to the public. Therefore, they operate for the public, seeking out the truth and reporting it fairly and accurately. If a journalist decides to break the code of ethics, they must stand accountable for their actions. These guidelines are the applied ethics in which journalists must follow to gain and maintain the trust of the public. They tell reporters how to act in certain situations.

Moral philosophy and applied ethics work closely with one another. If moral philosophy is the theory of decision-making, then applied ethics is the application of the theory to a particular context. By using theory to understand outcomes of an action, one can uncover the ethical perspective used to make the decision by applying moral philosophy. This dissertation

applies that approach by using five primary frameworks of moral philosophy: relativism, egoism, consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics (see Table 1).

The first framework, relativism states there are no objective or universal good deeds. Boss (2011) notes that the difference between right and wrong is socially constructed. Ladd (1973) defines relativism as the doctrine of moral rightness and wrongness. He goes on to explain that there are no absolute universal moral standards “binding on all men at all times” (p. 1). To clarify, good acts are relative from culture to culture or person to person; however, no single culture is greater than the other in any absolute sense.

Egoism is the second framework used in this dissertation. An egoist limits ethics to their own survival. Reflected in the fact that every decision they make serves their own best interest, they are typically arrogant and self-involved (Boss, 2011). Ayn Rand (1964) best describes egoism in her book, *The Virtue of Selfishness*:

The moral purpose of a man’s life is the achievement of his own happiness. This does not mean that he is indifferent to all men, that human life is of no value to him and that he has no reason to help others in an emergency. But it does mean that he does not subordinate his life to the welfare of others, that he does not sacrifice himself to their needs, that the relief of their suffering is not his primary concern, that any help he gives is an *exception*, not a rule, an act of generosity, not of moral duty. (p. 49)

Egoism suggests that the morally correct action is one that serves self-interest, even at the cost of harming others (Pojman & Fieser, 2011). For example, a professional athlete may leave their current team for another if the new team pays them a larger salary. The player leaves their previous team motivated by the chance to make more money, at the cost of losing the respect of

his or her former teammates. In sum, psychological egoism describes how people do behave; ethical egoism states how they ought to behave.

Consequentialism is concerned with consequences alone. This framework identifies the morally correct action as one that brings about best overall consequences for the most amounts of people. Any principle, virtue, or act is only good insofar as it yields those results; even if the result produces something inherently bad. Examples of this are sayings such as, “Do whatever it takes to get it done,” or “the end justifies the means.” People living within this framework believe it would be morally correct to kill one person at the reward of saving many.

Utilitarianism is an example of consequentialism. However, they differ in the justification of the consequence. Utilitarianism chooses the consequence which maximizes happiness for the most amounts of people (Pojman & Fieser, 2011). Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill are two well-known members of the utilitarianism school of thought. Bentham (1789) posits that the correct act brings the most pleasure and the least pain. Mill (1863) furthered the utilitarianism perspective by defining the term happiness as that which occurs from intellectual, aesthetic, and social enjoyments.

In contrast, deontology argues that rightness or wrongness of an action depends on the person’s adherence to the rules (Pojman & Fieser, 2011). In other words, the end does not justify the means. The correct action is always the right thing to do based on a rule or rules. People living within this framework find rules to be intrinsically valuable, even when such actions potentially bring harm to others. For example, they find it wrong to lie or break a promise, even if it means hurting others in the process. In this case, lying is the wrong thing to do. Immanuel Kant believed duties came internally, constructed from consistent moral principles (Boss, 2011).

Conversely, divine command duties come from theistic sources. The 10 Commandments provide an example of the latter.

Virtue ethics stress character and virtue rather than one's duty or action. Boss (2011) suggests this virtue theory is concerned with people being who they should be rather than what their actions suggest. These actions emphasize moral character in contrast to the action which highlights duties or rules. Moreover, Pojman and Fieser (2011) define this framework as the production of morally correct persons who act accordingly out of spontaneous goodness and serve as role models to others. Though similar to egoism, virtue ethics includes social traits such as generosity and charity that one may not find in an egoistic framework. In sum, the difference lies between focus of doing good versus being good. For example, if someone portraying virtue ethics witnesses someone in need of help, they would stop and help, whereas a deontologist may weigh the pros and cons of helping the person in need. Instead of good deeds in certain circumstances, virtue ethics entails good people being trusted to make the right decisions.

Table 1

Ethical Frameworks

Ethical Framework	Brief Description of Perspective
Relativism	Goods are relative from culture to culture or person to person.
Egoism	Limits ethics to one's own survival.
Consequentialism	What is good is that which brings the best consequences.
Deontology	Concerned with rule following, and finding those rules to be intrinsically valuable.
Virtue Ethics	Instead of doing good, focus on being good.

These five ethical frameworks serve as a lens through which to view the characters within Disney films. By using Christopher Vogler's Hero's Journey as pattern of analysis, one can analyze a character's ethical perspective by analyzing the outcome of their actions at each stage within the story arc. Then, by using the defined frameworks of differing moral philosophies, each character's ethical perspective will emerge as the reasoning the character used when justifying their actions.

The Hero's Journey

Most stories share three primary qualities in common: the dramatic code, archetypal characters, and dramatic structure. Through any medium, stories experience the dramatic code (Truby, 2008). The dramatic code is a depiction of how a character grows or evolves. Each character within a story falls into a specific category, or archetype. Voytilla (1999) defines archetypes as the function of a character within a story. The power of the archetypal story is in providing the audience with a human experience (McKee, 1997). Lastly, all good stories follow

a narrative, or dramatic, structure. In one of the first dramatic structures, Aristotle writes all stories must have a beginning, middle, and end (Aristotle & Butcher, 1961). One of the most popular dramatic structures to evolve out of Aristotle's model was Gustav Freytag's Plot Pyramid. His layout divided every story into an exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement (see Figure 1; Morris, 1898).

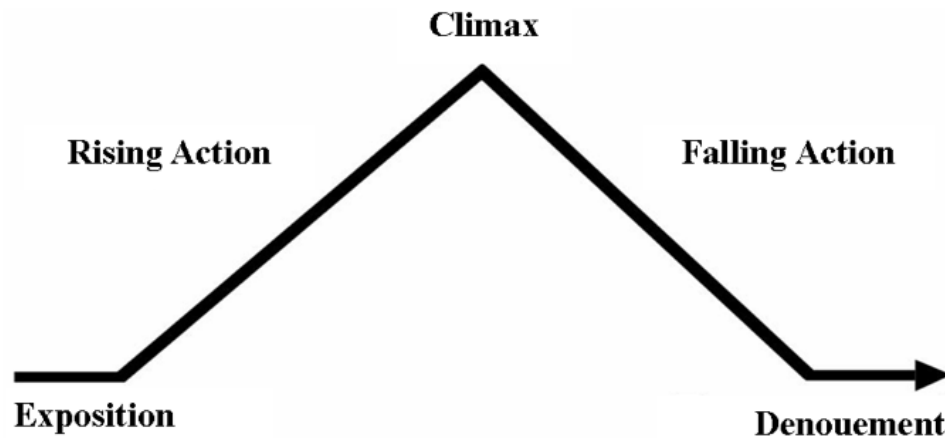


Figure 1. Freytag's Plot Pyramid. This figure illustrates the five stages of Freytag's Plot Pyramid.

The beginning of a hero's journey divulges background information used to set up the hero; the mid-section of the journey describes the source of conflict, and the ending shows the hero's overcoming of that conflict. Campbell's model provides a systematic way to analyze a character's pattern or development process by focusing on the archetypal hero. In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell argues that heroes undergo a journey that removes them from their known world, where they undergo a process of self-discovery and self-integration (Campbell, 2008). This process serves as a way of maintaining balance and harmony in the hero's life. Campbell's Monomyth contains 17 incidents, broken into three main stages: the separation, the initiation, and the return (see Table 2).

Table 2

Campbell's 17-Stage Hero's Journey

Stage	Incident
The Separation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call to Adventure 2. Refusal of the Call 3. Supernatural Aid 4. Crossing the Threshold 5. Belly of the Whale
The Initiation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. The Road of Trials 7. The Meeting with the Goddess 8. Woman as Temptress 9. Atonement with the Father 10. Apotheosis 11. The Ultimate Boon
The Return	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Refusal of the Return 13. The Magic Flight 14. Rescue from Without 15. Re-crossing the Threshold 16. Master of Two Worlds 17. Freedom to Live

While working for the Disney Company, Christopher Vogler simplified Campbell's work in a company memo, crafting a 12-step journey in comparison to Campbell's 17 (see Table 3). Using a traditional three-act structure, Vogler's (2007) story arc is a more practical guide to film), thus, making it a better fit for this dissertation. He then applied his hero's journey while producing films such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, and *The Lion King*, all movies contained within this study's population sample. Later, after expanding on his memo, Vogler (2007) wrote a book containing more examples and fully developed ideas. This study employs Vogler's structure due to its better fit for movies.

Table 3

Vogler's 12-Step Hero's Journey

Stage
1. Ordinary World
2. Call to Adventure
3. Refusal of the Call
4. Meeting with the Mentor
5. Crossing the First Threshold
6. Tests, Allies, Enemies
7. Approach to the Inmost Cave
8. The Ordeal
9. Reward
10. The Road Back
11. The Resurrection
12. Return with the Elixir

As the opening scene unfolds, the hero's story begins by portraying them as an ordinary person in an ordinary world (Vogler, 2007). Writers portray the heroes as human or containing human characteristics, such as talking or walking, even if depicted as an animal. This facilitates identification between the viewer and the character. Since the viewer usually experiences the journey alongside the hero, this allows the audience to sympathize with the hero as their journey progresses.

In Step 2, the hero receives a Call to Adventure, presenting them with a challenge or quest (Voytilla, 1999). This call may occur in a single request or a series of multiple calls until the hero accepts (Vogler, 2007). For example, the king may call on the hero to save the city from the nomads or the queen must begin her search for a suitor.

In Step 3, the hero momentarily hesitates to answer the call. Vogler (2007) identifies this as the Refusal of the Call. Though often the feeling is brief, the adventure may seem too overwhelming for the hero or the discomfort level too high. Without the high risks or potential danger, the audience will not feel compelled to continue on the hero's journey with the character.

After the hero experiences the hesitation or refuses the call, a mentor appears to give the needed support, advice, knowledge, and/or confidence needed to complete the journey (Vogler, 2007). The Meeting with the Mentor occurs during Step 4, although this mentor does not have to be a physical character; it can also be a source of courage or wisdom from within (Voytilla, 1999). Examples of strong mentors from other movies are Mr. Miyagi from *The Karate Kid*, Yoda from *Star Wars*, or Jiminy Cricket from *Pinocchio*.

During Step 5, Crossing the Threshold, the hero commits to the adventure, typically at the conclusion of Act 1 (Vogler, 2007). At this point, the hero crosses from the known world and enters into the unknown. However, the hero may need a forceful push from their mentor or other outside source (Voytilla, 1999). Furthermore, the hero must show the skills necessary to carry out the adventure (Lim & Lee, 2014). At this point, there is no turning back from the adventure.

Tests, Allies, and Enemies comprise the sixth step of Vogler's journey. During the adventure, the hero faces tests while making friends and enemies along the way (Vogler, 2007). The hero and the audience learn the restrictions of the special world, and how it differs from the hero's ordinary world. The hero makes allies by testing who can be trusted or a sidekick may offer some help. Enemies and villains appear making the road hard to travel, and lastly, a rival may challenge the hero (Voytilla, 1999). Sometimes at this point, the hero again begins to doubt their ability to complete the journey. During this stage, the audience develops a stronger emotional attachment to the hero, feeling a sense of pleasure as challenges are overcome.

Step Seven, The Approach, is the process occurring near the middle of the story (Vogler, 2007). The hero and their newfound allies have dealt with the setbacks during the Tests stage and are preparing for the final battle with the enemy. The viewer's excitement begins to rise as they imagine the final battle, and what may potentially go wrong. This forces the audience into

an unavoidable tension until the hero overcomes the battle between good and evil (Lim & Lee, 2014).

Step Eight in Vogler's Journey is The Ordeal, the central, most magical stage of any hero's journey (Voytilla, 1999). During the final battle, the hero faces their greatest challenge and may even face a figurative "death" while experiencing a sense of "rebirth" (Vogler, 2007). The evil villain gives the hero a final test, one in which they must overcome their innermost demons. The audience becomes afraid for the hero, believing they may fail. Viewers face their fears alongside the character. It is during this feeling of sympathy that a viewer may begin to identify with the hero. For observational learning to occur, the audience may begin to become immersed into the story, cheering for the hero. This is an example of the retention stage in social learning theory. Once the audience begins to empathize with the character, the retention level increases.

After the hero faces death, they obtain the real or figurative Reward in Step 9 (Vogler, 2007). It sometimes appears as monetary treasure, winning the hand of the princess, or the obtaining of a greater knowledge. However, the highest prize is the hero's self-realization that comes with the satisfaction of achieving their goal and overcoming their greatest fears (Lim & Lee, 2014). Even though the hero collects the reward, the hero's journey is not over.

After the ordeal is over and the hero achieves the reward, step 10 is the Road Back. In Act 3, they return to the ordinary world with the treasure in hand (Vogler, 2007). They may have laughed in the face of death, overcome their greatest fear, or slain the mythical beast dragon (Voytilla, 1999). The return home is a conscious, internal decision made by the hero. However, an ease of mind replaces the original anxiety set on by the journey.

The Resurrection occurs during Step 11. In the course of the climax, the hero faces one final test (Vogler, 2007). Before this, the audience falls into a sense of false security believing that the hero won the battle. Through their actions, the hero's conflict experienced at the beginning of the story is now resolved. However, this is their final "death" and "rebirth" before returning home. The hero proves they can apply and recall the knowledge learned on their journey (Voytilla, 1999). This stage completes the transformation of the ordinary person into a true hero (Lim & Lee, 2014).

Lastly, in Step 12, the hero has earned the right to return home to the ordinary world (Voytilla, 1999). Vogler (2007) calls this the Return with the Elixir, which the hero shares with others or their kingdom (Lim & Lee, 2014). In some stories, the elixir has literal meaning, but in others, it could be intangible rewards such as fame, the heart of the princess, or peace in the land. They now have the power to transform the world with their newfound knowledge. In this final stage, all problems are resolved and all questions have answers. The story has come to a close and normalcy returned to the Ordinary World.

Vogler's 12-step process serves this dissertation as a thorough examination of narrative structure. It allows the research to maintain a consistent pattern of content analysis across the sample. Vogler's model best serves this study over Campbell's due to its applicability to film.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a review of the literature related to media ethics and their potential to captivate and teach children. The discussion on the influence of storytelling demonstrates that media have the power to alter one's sense of reality. Cultivation Theory further explains this concept by stating the more television a person watches, the larger impact it has on a person's perception of society. Then Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory provided support to

strengthen the argument on Disney's potential effect on children. According to Bandura, children discover their identity through observing behaviors, personal or mediated. Next, the term "ethics" was discussed and defined followed by an examination of the five ethical frameworks a character may portray. Lastly, this chapter outlined the Hero's Journey and how it guides the methodology, which will be outlined in detail in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Overview

This chapter begins with an examination of and explanation for choosing a qualitative content analysis methodology, followed by an identification of methods used in selecting the sample and an overview of the categories identified in the coding frame. The chapter then discusses the data collection methods and categorization of film characters that outlines the research design used in this study. Finally, an outline of the data analysis process identifies the steps taken to ensure reliability and validity.

As stated in Chapter 1, the researcher chose the qualitative content analysis method after comparing the study's focus and the factors that qualitative research best serves. Schreier (2012) developed the following checklist for knowing when to use a Qualitative Content Analysis:

1. When you are dealing with rich data that requires interpretation
2. On verbal data
3. On visual data
4. On data sampled from other sources (documents, internet, etc.)
5. On data collected yourself (interviews, focus groups, etc.). (p.3)

This study satisfies all of the steps in the above checklist. Furthermore, it deals with rich data that requires much interpretation. The researcher observed the actions and listened to the words of lead male characters in ten different Disney films; then by definition, identified the ethical framework portrayed by the character in the film. In this case, meaning is not standard, but constructed by the researcher. Categorization occurs after observing the actions, listening to the verbal communication, and observing the nonverbal communication methods of the

character, satisfying two more items on Schreier's checklist: verbal and visual data. Lastly, the data sampled came from movies, and the researcher collected the data by conducting an observational analysis of the films.

Sample

The sample for this study consists of ten animation films produced by the Walt Disney Company. A nonprobability convenience sample serves as the best choice of subject selection for this study. Disney produced all the movies selected during their Renaissance Era of 1989-1999. This population only includes films that are fully animated and produced for theatrical release.

Sample Selection Criteria

Six of the ten movies were selected per the following criteria: (1) each was produced during the Disney Renaissance Era; (2) each is an animated film produced for theatrical release, and; (3) each contains a lead, male protagonist. To complete the analysis of the Disney Renaissance Era, the residual four films containing lead female protagonists with a male supporting characters will remain in the study. As Bandura (1977) stated, a child is more likely to identify with a character or person containing traits similar to their own. Since this study focuses on the projection of morality on boys, it makes sense to only observe the male protagonists within the films, as boys will not typically identify with the female characters (Feilitzen & Linne, 1975; Voort, 1986). In addition, all movies in this sample are currently available for purchase in DVD format, making them public forms of documentation. The following ten male characters and their respective films serve as the articles of observation for this study: Prince Eric – *The Little Mermaid* (1989); Bernard – *The Rescuers Down Under* (1990); Beast – *Beauty and the Beast* (1991); Aladdin – *Aladdin* (1992); Simba – *The Lion King*

(1994); John Smith – *Pocahontas* (1995); Quasimodo – *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996); Hercules – *Hercules* (1997); Captain Li Shang – *Mulan* (1998); and Tarzan – *Tarzan* (1999).

Data Collection and Categorization

Data was collected by watching the films and completing a coding frame. At minimum, all films were viewed twice. Initial coding of the films occurred during the first viewing. Then two weeks from the initial viewing, the second observation serves as the verification of themes and categories. This also served to verify intra-coder reliability, as is discussed later in this chapter.

Data collection involved the viewing of each movie in its entirety. A coding frame was used to analyze data through five different ethical perspectives. These ethical frameworks include:

1. Relativism – values are relative from culture to culture or person to person.
2. Egoism – limits ethics to one's own survival.
3. Consequentialism – the best choice brings the most good to the most amount of people.
4. Deontology – framework concerned with rule following, and finding those rules to be intrinsically valuable.
5. Virtue ethics – instead of doing good, focus on being good.

These categories encompass the five approaches to understanding ethics and the theory behind why people act and make certain decisions. The coding frame was completed using descriptive terms instead of numerical counting as in quantitative content analyses. Appendix A provides an example of the coding frame utilized while viewing the films. Coding with

descriptive terms included the actions, the non-verbal cues, and the verbalizations of the characters.

Coding the Characters

Christopher Vogler's Hero's Journey serves as a guide to analyze the films included in this study. As outlined in Chapter 2, there are 12-steps of the hero's journey. At each stage, the researcher identified the ethical perspective personified by the male protagonist of the film. Since there is a chance that each character may portray more than one framework, the coder identified each framework as prominent, present, or not present in the performance of each male protagonist. In the Vogler's (2007) story arc, the protagonist is also referred to as the hero, who experiences the trials, fights the battles, and wins.

Together, the stages of Vogler's journey and the ethical frameworks outlined above serve as the x-axis and y-axis of the codebook. While watching the movies, the observer waits for an incident of the hero's journey to occur, for example, the call to adventure. At the time of the incident, the researcher will categorize the character's ethical perspective by analyzing the actions, the non-verbal cues, and the verbalizations of the characters and marking prominent, present, or not present. Then, coding by definition, the researcher will assign an ethical perspective to the character based on the analysis. When coding, the researcher looked for four characteristics of each ethical perspective (see Table 4).

Table 4

Four Characteristics of Each Ethical Perspective

Ethical Framework	Characteristic
Relativism	<p>Example: Some cultures believe in polygamy while others deem it immoral.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the hero believes they did the right thing, then it is right 2. Rightness of the action is relative to the person, culture, or historical period 3. Societal norms justify the action 4. The action expresses the opinion of the individual
Egoism	<p>Example: When a prince kills his father to surpass his father as king.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Motivated by their own self-interest 2. Seeks to better their current position in life 3. Will harm others to get ahead 4. Lies to get their way
Consequentialism	<p>Example: When heroes sacrifice themselves to dispose of a bomb to save the city.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The action benefits the most amount of people 2. Spreads happiness and relieves suffering 3. Good or bad outcome does not matter 4. Hero chooses the best possible action
Deontology	<p>Example: The prince tells the truth to the princess about her father's death, even though it will hurt her feelings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Duty focused over consequence 2. Do what is right for its own sake 3. Moral rightness depends on their set of values 4. Moral law supersedes cultural law
Virtue Ethics	<p>Example: The hero cannot kill the antagonist since the Ten Commandments state thou shall not kill.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Right being over right action 2. Acts show concern for oneself and others 3. Do the right thing because it's the right thing to do 4. Can be depended on to do the right thing

Data Analysis

Inductive and deductive data analysis was accomplished via the content analysis. It included the actions, verbal, and non-verbal communications made by the characters in the film. A coding frame in Excel displays the data in visual representations to discover patterns and differences between the male protagonists. The tables in Excel display the ethical framework portrayed by the character at each stage of Vogler's Journey. This also shows the progression of the characters' ethical patterns over the course of the narrative. Indicators used to determine the ethical perspectives were also displayed in the codebook.

Reliability of the Coding Frame

Reliability can test the quality of the coding frame and evaluate the acceptability of the analysis (Schreier, 2012). Intra-coder reliability was utilized to assess the reliability of the coding frame and for confidence in the accuracy of the findings. Humans are prone to making mistakes. Therefore, it becomes important to check for reliability when an instrument is chosen for observation methods (Buddenbaum & Novak, 2001). This study needs an intra-coder reliability check due to the single observer used in this dissertation. Watching the films once and then again in two weeks serves to verify the intra-coder reliability. After both analyses are completed, the researcher conducted a coefficients of agreement test. To calculate the percentage of agreement, the number of units of coding on which the codes agree is divided by the total number of coding units and then multiplied by 100 (Schreier, 2012).

Validity of the Coding Frame

Jury validation is best utilized to assess the content validity of the coding frame (Buddenbaum & Novak, 2001). The researcher called upon outside experts in the field to validate the measures used in the codebook. A panel of doctoral candidates obtaining their

degree in Communications Media and Instructional Technology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania conducted the audit procedure to provide more evidence for the quality of the coding frame. Before validation, the auditors received a rule book that included an overview of the hero's journey, a character sketch of the male protagonists, and the ethical frameworks with the four defining characteristics explained. These rules allowed for consistency among the coders. The auditors determined if validity of the findings, interpretations, and conclusions were supported by the data (Creswell, 2013). In this study, each expert called upon read the rulebook, watched *Aladdin*, and completed the coding frame.

Three auditors completed the coding frame and the rulebook served as an important guideline to keep the auditor's coding consistent. They displayed consistency in their coding of prominent frameworks through the first half of the film. However, as the character began to go through a change in their ethical framework, the coders varied in their analysis. One coder believed Aladdin transitioned into a virtue ethics framework throughout the final five stages of the journey, while the other two noted the hero bounced around between egoism, virtue ethics, and consequentialism. While the prominent coding remained relatively similar, the coding of other present ethical frameworks varied from coder to coder. One auditor very rarely identified a present framework alongside a prominent, while another coded two or three in addition to their prominent frameworks.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the case study methodology with a content analysis interpretation model employed by this dissertation. The content analysis examined ten Disney movies to identify the ethical frameworks portrayed by each male protagonist. In all, ten movies were selected as part of this study: *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *The Rescuers Down Under*

(1990), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), *The Lion King* (1994), *Pocahontas* (1995), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), *Hercules* (1997), *Mulan* (1998), and *Tarzan* (1999).

This chapter outlined the research design, followed by an identification of the data collection methods. This included a preview of the data analysis that will occur in Chapter 4. Data collection methods were described by discussing the categories chosen, and applied using the coding frame and five ethical frameworks arose as the categories of interpretation. Completing the coding frame using descriptive terms instead of numerical data collection best serves qualitative content analyses; Chapter 4 will provide an analysis of the qualitative data collected during the content analysis described above

CHAPTER 4

DATA AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine Disney animation films to uncover ethical motivations of male protagonists for the reason that these portrayals provide modeling examples for young boys. With that, children are more likely to imitate those characters of the same gender. Examination of these characters' ethical frameworks uncovers an understanding of the ethical modeling Disney conveys to young boys as they develop their own codes of ethics. This identification occurs when a child observes an action, belief, or value from a model and adopts it as its own.

At the center of this study is the following research question: What ethical perspectives do the lead male characters personify in Disney animation films produced from 1989-1999?

This chapter presents background information and a plot synopsis of all ten cases followed by a discussion of significant findings within each film. This study examined films from the company's Renaissance Era that carried a lead male character within their narrative. The cases are presented in order of theatrical release as follows: *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *The Rescuers Down Under* (1990), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), *The Lion King* (1994), *Pocahontas* (1995), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), *Hercules* (1997), *Mulan* (1998), and *Tarzan* (1999).

Each case discussion begins with general production information on the film, followed by a plot synopsis using Vogler's (2007) version of the hero's journey as a mode of observation. The individual case findings are discussed correlating to each stage of the story arc and which ethical framework the character portrays at that time. Some characters do not appear or make a

decision in every stage throughout their movie, therefore, only stages where the character appears are analyzed. Furthermore, not every stage will contain a present framework in addition to the prominent characteristic. Then, each case closes with a summary of ethical frameworks identified in the films. Lastly, the chapter finishes with a discussion of the emerging themes uncovered after data analysis.

Case 1: *The Little Mermaid*

In 1989, Disney released its 28th animated film, *The Little Mermaid*, based on the Hans Christian Andersen short story. Prince Eric serves as the lead male character in the film, however he is not the lead protagonist. His role as the deuteragonist means he is the second most important character in the film. The main protagonist here is Ariel, a mermaid princess who longs to leave her underwater life for the human world (Ashman, Musker & Clements, Musker, 1989). After making a deal with the sea witch Ursula, Ariel and her friends Flounder and Sebastian, must find a way to make things right with Prince Eric. Prince Eric remains a virtuous hero throughout the entirety of this film.

Ordinary World

Eric predominantly portrays a virtue ethics perspective at this stage. His first scene portrays him sailing at sea with his crew. They tell him tales of King Triton, the ruler of the merpeople, but Grimsby, Eric's servant, claims the stories nonsensical. Eric does not act as royalty who would stereotypically let the crew run the ship. He focuses more on right being than right action by assisting his men in managing and maintaining the vessel. As they ride, he steps in to help someone raise the sails and another tie a knot to tie down the sails. He does not need to work amongst the men, but steps right in where needed.

Crossing the First Threshold

Eric still predominantly shows signs of a virtue ethics perspective. As his crew throws a birthday party for their prince, a strong storm appears and lightning strikes the vessel, setting it on fire. The crew manages to escape on lifeboats, but Max, their pet sheepdog, remains stuck on board. Eric climbs back onto the burning ship and tosses the dog overboard into the water. Leaving the safety of his row boat was the more dangerous option, but Eric knew it was the right thing to do. His actions showed concern for oneself as well as the other members of the crew. At this time, Eric can be depended on to do the right thing. Before he can leave the ship and return to safety, the fire causes an explosion that knocks the prince unconscious and thrusts him into the water. Lifeless and floating in the ocean, Ariel rescues Eric and brings him ashore, singing to him as he regains consciousness. Grimsby and Max scare Ariel back into the water before Eric meets his rescuer; all he has is the memory of her voice.

Test, Allies, Enemies

Virtue ethics remain prominent during this stage. It begins with Eric walking the beach looking for Ariel. Max begins barking and runs off down the shoreline leading Eric to Ariel, who is now in human form after making a deal with Ursula, the sea witch. Ariel traded her voice for legs that allow her to walk as a human. Since she lost her voice, Eric does not recognize the heroine who pulled him from the sea. Since she cannot speak, Eric believes she has been through something dramatic and tells her, “don’t worry, I’ll help you” (Ashman, Musker & Clements, Musker, 1989). At this time, he has no idea who she is, but still offers to help a damsel in distress. He could have kept on his journey of finding his rescuer, but instead, he saves a woman who seems lost. He chose the right action over his own personal interest.

That evening, the two take a romantic boat ride under the stars. Just before they kiss, Ursula's eels tip the rowboat tossing the couple into the water. The next day, Ursula, disguised as a beautiful woman named Vanessa, appears and uses Ariel's trapped singing voice to place Eric under a spell. The spell hypnotizes the prince, causing him to fall in love with Vanessa, forgetting about Ariel. The next day at the palace, Ariel overhears Eric and Vanessa explaining to Grimsby that they wish to be married at once. Heartbroken, Ariel later learns that Vanessa is Ursula in disguise and makes plans to stop the wedding.

Ursula hypnotizes Eric, therefore he cannot control his actions. It could be seen as egoism since he leaves Ariel behind to marry Vanessa after almost sharing a kiss with Ariel. However, he was not in the right mind to know what he was doing. Thus, since Eric was aligned with the virtue ethics perspective at the beginning of this stage, the assessment can be made of a prominent virtue ethics perspective.

Approach to the Inmost Cave

After the spell breaks, Eric immediately realizes Ariel is his true love. This may seem like an egoistic trait as he leaves Vanessa at the altar. However, virtue ethics remains prominent during this stage due to Eric not having control over his actions while under Ursula's spell. During the wedding ceremony, Ariel, along with the help of some friends, is able to break the spell before Eric and Vanessa complete their vows. Eric, now free from the spell, realizes Ariel is the girl he has been looking for all along. He chooses right being over right action, when he regains control of his decision-making ability.

Just as they move to share their first kiss, the sun sets and Ariel's deal with Ursula ends, transforming Ariel back into a mermaid. Vanessa transforms back into Ursula, captures Ariel, and dives back into the ocean. Eric proclaims he cannot lose her again, and follows Ursula and Ariel.

He never second-guesses his choice to dive into the ocean to save Ariel from Ursula. King Triton, Ariel's father, negotiates with Ursula offering his own life in exchange for Ariel's safety. Ursula is now queen of the sea and controls the kingdom.

The Ordeal

Virtue ethics are prominent as Eric kills Ursula at the end of this stage. By doing so, he saves Ariel, returns Triton to his throne, and frees the other prisoners held captive. His actions showed concern for himself and others. Consequentialism was also present as Eric's actions benefitted the most amounts of people. He ultimately spreads happiness by relieving suffering. This framework is only present and not prominent, as Eric's main goal was to save Ariel, not the kingdom.

Return with the Elixir

Ariel and Eric finally marry. The entire kingdom, as well as all the sea creatures are there to support the two in holy matrimony. Even Triton, who initially disliked the human race, is there to support his daughter. Eric's decision to marry Ariel continues his prominently virtue ethics perspective. He loves her. Therefore, he did the right thing by marrying Ariel.

Case 1: Summary of Findings

In *The Little Mermaid*, Prince Eric makes an ethical decision during 6 of the 12 stages of Ariel's journey (see Figure 2). In all six, he prominently portrays a virtue ethics framework. Throughout the movie, Eric continues to make the virtuous decision. As shown throughout the story, his acts show concern for himself and others. Only during The Ordeal was another framework present. In that stage, he also showed signs of a consequentialist. Eric kills Ursula to save Ariel, but his action also benefits the most amount of people by spreading happiness and relieving suffering.

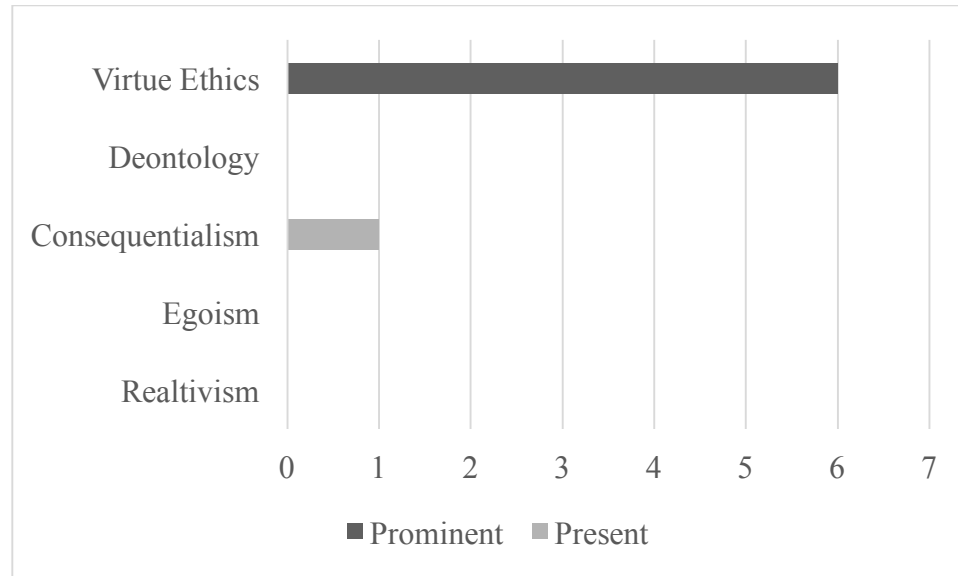


Figure 2. Prince Eric’s ethical frameworks. This figure illustrates the number of prominent and present ethical frameworks identified during Prince Eric’s hero’s journey.

Case 2: The Rescuers Down Under

Disney released *The Rescuers Down Under* on November 16, 1990. This movie is the sequel to *The Rescuers* which debuted in 1977. This sequel to *The Rescuers* follows Bernard and Bianca, two members of the Rescue Aid Society (RAS), on their search for a missing boy named Cody in the Australian outback (Schumacher & Butoy, Gabriel, 1990). Along their journey, they make friends with Jake, a kangaroo rat and the RAS operative in Australia. Together they save Cody and Marahute, a rare golden eagle, from the evil poacher, McLeach. Bernard serves as the lead male protagonist of the film and the point of observation for this portion of the study. He begins the film as an egoist, but puts his duty-focused decision making ahead of his own self-interests.

Ordinary World

In the Ordinary World, Bernard shows prominently egoistic traits. The movie opens with Bernard out to dinner with Miss Bianca in New York City. An incoming mission interrupts their

dinner, and Bernard's attempt at proposing to Miss Bianca. When Bernard attempts to pop the question, he drops the ring and chases it across the restaurant as it rolls away. He is more concerned about the proposal than the rescue mission. When Francois, tries to tell Bernard of the mission, Bernard ignores him as his focus stays on popping the question. Ignoring the mission, Bernard chooses the action that best benefits his current position.

When he returns, Bianca tells Bernard she knows what he is about to say. At first, Bernard thinks she is talking about the proposal. However, it turns out to be a rescue mission requiring them to save a young boy, Cody, from a poacher named McLeach in Australia.

Call to Adventure

Deontology becomes prominent during this stage as egoistic traits remain present. Miss Bianca receives the call to adventure during dinner, but Bernard is unaware until the two accept their mission to the RAS back at headquarters. Though Bernard believes Miss Bianca is going to announce their prenuptial agreement to the RAS field office, she actually accepts the mission to Australia. When told they must fly out immediately, Bernard realizes what just happened. This shows his egoistic tendencies have subsided due to his duty-focused mentality. He does not want to go on the mission, but as an agent of the Rescue Aid Society, he feels a sense of duty to save the boy.

Refusal of the Call

In this stage, Bernard still shows signs of a deontological framework as he did during the Call to Adventure; he may not want to accept the mission, but as a member of the RAS, it is his duty to save Cody. To get to Australia, Bernard and Miss Bianca must find Wilbur, an Albatross who aids them in their flight. Even though a severe winter storm has hit New York City, Bernard and Bianca convince Wilbur to fly them down under. As they approach Wilbur's home, Bernard

begins making excuses such as, “Miss Bianca, I'm not sure it's such a good idea to fly this soon after eating” (Schumacher & Butoy, Gabriel, 1990). Even as they knock on Wilbur’s door, Bernard hurriedly assumes no one is home. His excuse making still shows signs of egoistic traits as he only worries about his own best interest.

Crossing the First Threshold

Bernard crosses the first threshold into the unknown world as soon as they take off for Australia. He knows he must go save Cody as a member of the RAS, but his focus remains on his own self-interests. Bernard’s decision to fly down under to save the boy shows his dedication to a duty-based ethics perspective. Though not prominent, egoism remains present during this stage. Bernard begins the mission, but only to fulfill duty. He does not take on the assignment to benefit the greater good.

Meeting of the Mentor

At this time, Bernard still shows prominent signs of deontological behavior. Egoism remains present when Bernard’s jealousy interferes with Jake’s advice. When Bernard and Bianca land in Australia, they meet Jake, a kangaroo rat who is the RAS’ regional operative. Throughout the movie, he serves the role of tour guide and protector while Bernard and Bianca are down under. Bernard reluctantly allows Jake to be their guide even though Jake outwardly flirts with Miss Bianca. Bernard does not outwardly deny needing Jake’s help. He knows they would get lost in the outback without Jake’s guidance, therefore he puts duty before self-interest.

Tests, Allies, Enemies

During this stage, Bernard prominently remains a deontologist. His actions remain duty focused while also desiring to marry Miss Bianca. While riding a wombat on their way to McLeach’s lair, Bernard falls into a briar patch. Bianca pulls the briars from Bernard’s back as

Jake is away scouting the area. Showing his egoistic side, Bernard attempts to use the alone time for a second proposal attempt. Before he can pop the question, Jake shows up saving Bernard and Bianca from a snake attack. Bernard, still motivated by his own self-interest, lets his guard down and almost gets himself and Miss Bianca killed. Therefore, egoism remains present. After tying the snake's mouth shut, he convinces the reptile to take them to McLeach's lair. He continues on the mission, therefore, he also remains committed to saving Cody.

Back at Marahute's nest, virtue ethics begin to become present for the first time. Bernard, Bianca, and Jake climb down to warn Cody about McLeach. Before they can warn Cody, Marahute returns and McLeach captures her with a net shot from his truck. As Jake, Bianca, and Cody attempt to cut the net free, McLeach captures them along with Marahute. Back in the nest, Bernard hides the eggs from Joanna, McLeach's pet lizard, by replacing them with rocks. After Joanna leaves the nest, Wilbur appears and Bernard convinces him to protect the eggs while Bernard goes and rescues Bianca, Jake, and Cody. He knew what McLeach was after and the right thing to do was save the unborn eagles.

Approach to the Inmost Cave

During the approach, Bernard remains prominently deontological with virtue ethics characteristics present. He realizes he has a long way to go in his attempt to catch McLeach's truck. Along the way, he finds a sleeping boar, tames it, and rides it to McLeach's lair. After McLeach captures Bianca, Jake, Cody, and Marahute, Bernard knew he had to save them from the poacher. It also remains his duty to save Cody and Miss Bianca. His act showed concern for others over oneself. Thus, virtue ethics are also present.

The Ordeal

During this stage, Bernard remains prominently deontological, as he fulfills his duty by saving Cody from death. At a location named Crocodile Falls, McLeach begins lowering Cody into the reptile-infested waters with a tow rope attached to his truck. Just before Cody drops into the water, Bernard shuts down the vehicle. He takes the keys from the ignition and brings them to Bianca and Jake so they can free themselves from the cage. At the same time, McLeach prepares to shoot the rope holding Cody above the crocodile infested waters. Bernard convinces Joanna to chase him and causes her to collide with McLeach pushing them both over the cliff and into the water. Joanna reaches the shore, but McLeach falls to his death over the falls. Then, the rope holding Cody snaps and he falls into the water. Bernard dives in after Cody and slows their progress down river, but Bernard cannot pull them to dry land. His actions showed he was duty focused over consequence. When he dove into the waters, he knew there was a chance of death by crocodile, but he pushed that aside and focused on Cody. With the key Bernard gave to them, Bianca and Jake free Marahute. Together, they fly over the falls in time to save Cody from hitting the rocks at the bottom. Virtue ethics remains present as Bernard showed concern for oneself and others. Bianca depended on him to do the right thing and he made it happen.

The Road Back

Cody thanks Bernard for saving him. Miss Bianca calls Bernard, "The hero of the day" (Schumacher & Butoy, Gabriel, 1990). Then Bernard says, "Miss Bianca, before anything else happens, will you marry me" (Schumacher & Butoy, Gabriel, 1990). Bernard slips back into an egoist perspective. He never responds to Cody's gesture of thanks. His first words are his proposal to Bianca. He defaults back to motivation by self-interest, however, his mission is now over and duty no longer drives his actions.

Case 2: Summary of Findings

Bernard predominantly portrays a deontological perspective through most of the film. Seven of the 12 stages show Bernard remaining duty-focused over consequence (see Figure 3). Beginning in the ordinary world, Bernard shows prominent egoistic traits as he ignores everyone at the restaurant to focus on his marriage proposal. Then, during the Call to Adventure, Bernard's duty pushes his egoism aside. When the mission calls, his number one focus stays on saving Cody. Virtue ethics also present themselves during the tests, approach, and rewards stages. Duty drives his actions, but the greater good benefits from his decision-making.

After completing his mission and saving the boy, Bernard transitions back into an egoist. He only concerns himself with asking for Miss Bianca's hand in marriage. When duty no longer drives Bernard, he reverts back to self-motivating actions. These stem from his responsibilities as an RAS field agent. It is Bernard's duty to save Cody, not because he wants to or because it is the right thing to do.

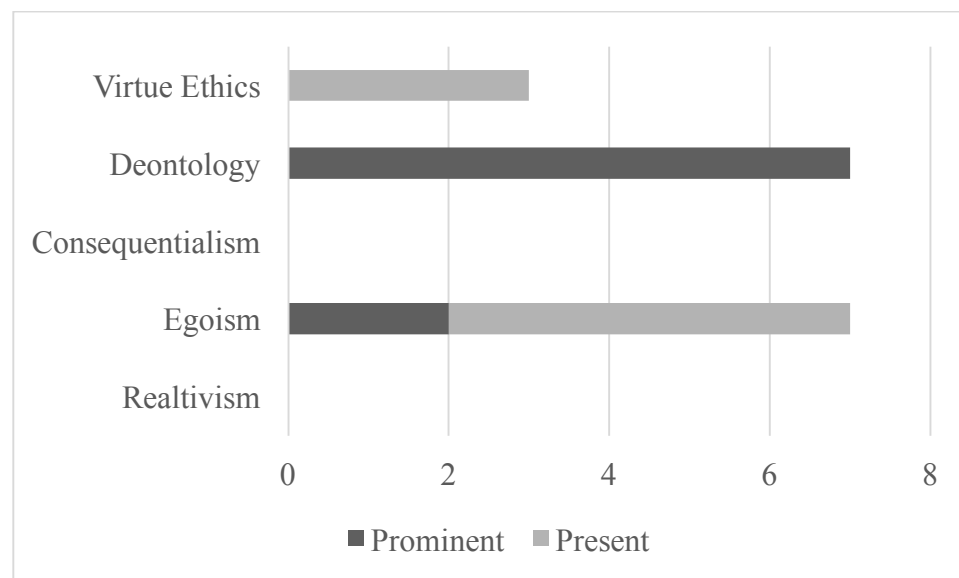


Figure 3. Bernard's ethical frameworks. This figure illustrates the number of prominent and present ethical frameworks identified during Bernard's hero's journey.

Case 3: *Beauty and the Beast*

Beauty and the Beast (1991) is the third movie produced during the Disney Renaissance era. Adapted from the fairy tale *La Belle et la Bête* by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont, the film follows Beast (a prince turned monster) and Belle (the daughter of a local inventor) on their adventure to find beauty from within (Hahn & Trousdale, Wise, 1991). Beast serves as the lead male protagonist of the film and the point of observation for this portion of the study. However, the story follows Belle's hero's journey.

Ordinary World

During this stage, Beast shows prominent signs of an egoist. The beast's egoistic ways brought a curse upon him and his servants. Before being transformed into a monster, the narrator of the film describes the prince as "spoiled, selfish, and unkind" (Hahn & Trousdale, Wise, 1991). An enchantress transforms the handsome young man into Beast when she put his heart to the test appearing as an ugly old woman. When the prince denies her request for shelter due to her ugly outward appearance, she knew there was no good in his heart. He continues his cynical dialogue until she reveals herself as a beautiful enchantress. Only then does the prince begin apologizing for his actions, not out of regret, but only after realizing her power and beauty.

Beast tries to better his current position after offending the woman. He had the chance to do the right thing by bringing in the old woman out of the cold rain. However, he fails to give her refuge based on her appearance, then when she reveals her power, he tries to backtrack on his actions. His self-interest motivates his decision-making. Seeing right through his act, the enchantress casts a spell on the prince transforming him into the beast portrayed throughout the rest of the movie. Her curse included an enchanted rose that would bloom until his 21st birthday. To turn back into a prince, he must learn to love another and earn her love in return by the time

the last petal of the enchanted rose falls. If he fails, he can never transform back into a prince. Disgusted by his appearance, he conceals himself inside the castle. Feeling such anger and shame, he believes no one will ever love him as a beast.

Call to Adventure

Beast prominently remains an egoist during the Call to Adventure. Maurice, Belle's father and local inventor, becomes lost in the woods and is chased by wolves. While on the run, he finds himself at the Beast's castle and enters through the front door before the wolves attack. Once inside, Maurice begins calling out for help. Beast discovers Maurice, accusing him of trespassing. For this, he throws Maurice into a prison cell. After a day or so, Maurice's daughter Belle feeds their chickens as Phillippe, the family horse, returns without Maurice. Worried, Belle tells Phillippe to take her to Maurice.

Beast remains an egoist for locking up Belle's father. Maurice was only looking for a place to stay after getting lost in the woods, but instead, Beast locks him up for staring at his ugly outward appearance. The Beast, not worried about Maurice's situation, only cares about himself. He is not afraid to harm others while getting his way.

Crossing the First Threshold

During this stage, Beast remains an egoist, as his actions satisfied his own needs. Phillippe guides Belle back to the castle. When she finds her father locked away in the castle tower, Maurice tells her to leave at once. Just then, Beast appears and confronts Belle. Hiding in the shadows and out of view, he only identifies himself as the master of this castle. Belle, still unable to see Beast, pleads with him to free her father from the prison. Beast claims there is nothing he can do to free her father.

Belle then offers to replace her father as prisoner. Amazed by her beauty and devotion to her father, Beast accepts the offer under one condition: she must stay in the castle forever. Before she can accept, Beast steps into the light. Belle gasps at his outward appearance. Though frightened, she agrees to stay in the castle. Beast then frees Maurice, dragging him off to a carriage before Belle was able to say goodbye to her father.

Beast paid no attention to Belle's emotions or wants. His self-interest motivates his actions. Overcome with feelings for Belle, Beast felt the only way she would stay is if he locked her up in the castle. He does permit her a room in the castle, instead of staying locked in the tower, although this occurred at Lumiere's request, not Beast's.

Meeting with the Mentor

Lumiere, Cogsworth, and Mrs. Potts serve as Beast's mentors. The film does not show how they first meet, but it does document their guidance as the movie progresses. Lumiere often gives Beast love advice as he courts Belle. Lumiere is kind-hearted, but does not always follow the master's rules. On the other hand, Cogsworth strictly follows the rules and does what he can to avoid trouble. Lastly, Mrs. Potts serves as the mother role to Beast. She is kind and level-headed, but she is also stern. She is not afraid to be honest with their master and give him the truth. Since the movie does not portray how they all met, an ethical analysis cannot be made.

Tests, Allies, Enemies

During this stage, Beast transitions from an egoist perspective into virtue ethics by learning to love Belle. No longer does he focus on his own needs and wants, but he pays special attention to hers as well. After Beast shows Belle to her room, he orders her to join him for dinner later that night. Later, in the dining room, Beast waits for Belle to join him for dinner. Cogsworth appears informing his master of Belle's refusal to come down for dinner. Beast

angrily runs to Belle's room ordering her to join him downstairs. When she declines claiming she is not hungry, he tells her that if she refuses to eat with him, she will not eat at all. Beast is not afraid to harm Belle to get his way. This egoistic trait displays Beast's current ethical framework.

Later that night, Belle explores the castle and comes across the forbidden west wing. There she finds the enchanted rose left behind by the witch at the beginning of the story. As she reaches out to touch it, Beast intervenes, roars, and demands her to leave the room. Belle, fearing for her life, runs out of the room and out the front door of the castle. While running, a pack of wolves begin to give chase. Just before they attack, Beast intervenes fighting them off and rescuing Belle. This selfless act marks the transition from Beast's egoism into a virtue ethical framework. His act showed concern for Belle at his expense. She left the castle after being sentenced to live within the walls forever, and instead of letting the wolves kill her, Beast saves Belle from the wild animals.

Back in the castle, Belle tends to Beast's wounds when they begin arguing about who was at fault. No longer afraid of Beast's temper, Belle thanks him for saving her life. He notices her kindness in response to his heroic act, softens his temperament, and says "you're welcome" (Hahn & Trousdale, Wise, 1991). His tough egoistic characteristics continue to soften.

Later, Beast tells Cogsworth and Lumiere that he has never felt this way about anyone. He decides to do something special for Belle and leads her into the library, her eyes closed as they enter. Once in the center of the room, Belle opens her eyes and exclaims her love for his collection. Sensing her joy and seeing the happiness on her face, Beast gifts her the library. The next few scenes show them sharing a meal and feeding birds in the garden while enjoying each other's company. Beast's anger and self-interest has subsided as more of his virtue ethics

characteristics become apparent. He cares for Belle instead of only caring for his own self-interest. Beast seems to have left his egoistic tendencies behind as he transitions to a virtue ethics perspective. He gives Belle the library out of kindness and affection, not to better his current position. He seeks her love and happiness by showing concern for oneself and others. Even Belle begins to notice. The lyrics of the song, “Something There,” describe the blossoming of their relationship (Ashman & Menken, 1991, track 7):

Belle:

There's something sweet and almost kind
But he was mean and he was coarse and unrefined
And now he's dear and so unsure
I wonder why I didn't see it there before

Beast:

She glanced this way, I thought I saw
And when we touched she didn't shudder at my paw
No it can't be, I'll just ignore
But then she's never looked at me that way before

Belle:

New and a bit alarming
Who'd have ever thought that this could be?
True that he's no Prince Charming
But there's something in him that I simply didn't see

Later that night, they come together for a romantic dinner prepared by the castle staff. After dinner, Belle teaches Beast how to dance and he's overwhelmed with happiness and smitten by Belle's beauty and kindness. Then, after seeing her father sick and lost in the woods, Beast tells Belle she must go and save her father and he releases her from her prison sentence.

Beast finally learns to love, but that is not enough to break the spell. Belle must love him in return. For example, he discovered her love for books, so he gives her the library. Additionally, he knows how much her father means to her, so Beast sets her free to save him from dying in the woods. He does these things to show her how much he cares, and because they are the right thing to do. Egoism is also present during this stage as he makes his transition from selfish to selfless.

The Ordeal

Beast continues to show traits of a virtue ethics perspective. Villagers storm the castle in an attempt to kill Beast. Gaston, the story's antagonist, finds Beast sulking in the west wing. Broken hearted, he shows no interest in fighting Gaston. Belle, Maurice, and Chip make it back to the castle just in time to stop Gaston from killing Beast. When Beast hears Belle's voice, it sparks him to fight back against Gaston.

As they battle, Gaston taunts Beast, claiming Belle as his own. After a brief struggle, Beast holds Gaston over the edge of the castle by his throat. Begging for mercy, Gaston drops his tough guy attitude. Beast realizes that killing Gaston is wrong and brings him back onto stable ground. He yells at Gaston, telling him to leave the castle and never return. This is a direct portrayal of Beast's virtuous framework. He could have easily killed Gaston many times throughout their battle. However, he knew that it was not right. Even when his temper returned

and he dangled Gaston over the edge, he chose not to drop Gaston to his death. He chose right being over right action.

Just then, Belle appears and calls out to Beast. He climbs up the castle wall to the balcony where she stands. As Beast embraces Belle, running his hand across her cheek, Gaston stabs him in the back. As Beast jumps back writhing in pain, Gaston loses his grip and falls from the castle balcony to his death. Beast, now on the ground with Belle at his side, tells her everything is going to be fine. He says, "And at least - I got to see you - one last time" (Hahn & Trousdale, Wise, 1991). Death overcomes him as the last words leave his lips. Belle, crying over his body, admits her love for him just as the last petal from the enchanted rose falls. The spell is broken as Beast conquers death and transforms back into a prince. Beast's acts show concerns for oneself and others.

Case 3: Summary of Findings

Beast is present for 11 of the 12 stages of the hero's journey (see Figure 4). Though present for 11, Beast only makes a decision during 6 of the 12 stages. He predominantly portrays an egoist perspective during 3 of those 6 stages. Then, a transformation occurs during the Ordeal. He transitions to a virtue ethical framework, no longer focusing on his own self-interest. Instead, he concerns himself with the care of others. He maintains his perspective during the remainder of the journey.

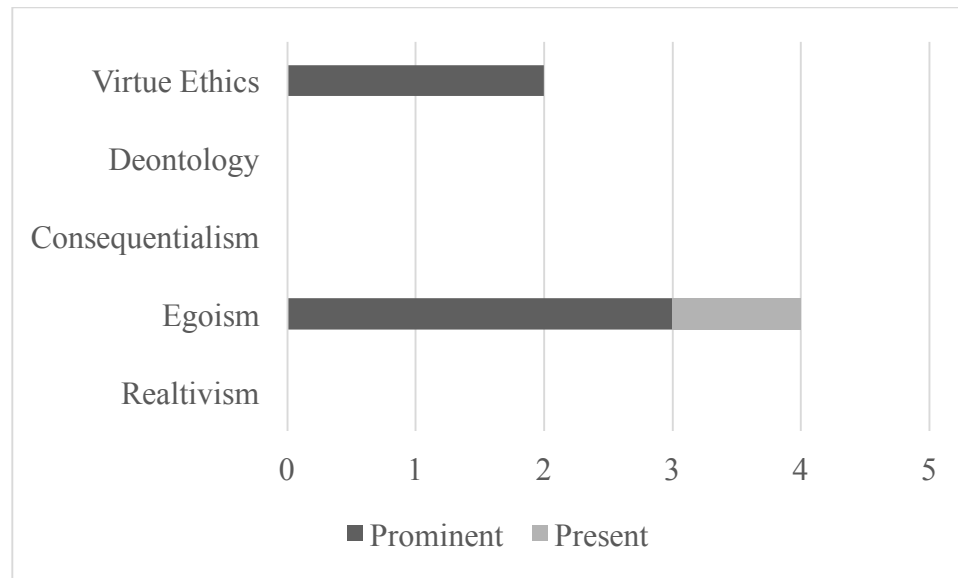


Figure 4. Beast’s ethical frameworks. This figure illustrates the number of prominent and present ethical frameworks identified during Beast’s hero’s journey.

Case 4: *Aladdin*

Produced in 1992, *Aladdin* is the fourth film of the Disney Renaissance era. As the lead male protagonist of the film, Aladdin goes from street rat to prince with the help of Abu, Genie, and their magic carpet (Clements, Musker & Clements, Musker, 1992). He must vie for the love of Princess Jasmine against Jafar, the royal vizier to Jasmine’s father, the sultan. In the beginning of the film, Aladdin shows signs of an egoist, but by the end of the film, he transitions into a virtue ethical framework.

Ordinary World

In the Ordinary World, Aladdin is a gifted thief who scours the marketplace looking for food. His first scene in the movie shows him running away from the guards as they chase him for stealing a loaf of bread. Aladdin shows prominently a relativist perspective. The guards chase him for stealing but Aladdin justifies it by stating, “I only steal what I can’t afford” (Menken, 1992, track 3). The hero believes he did the right thing, so it is right in his mind. He

further confirms this perspective in the song, “One Jump Ahead,” he sings, “Gotta eat to live. Gotta steal to eat. Tell you all about it when I got the time!” (Menken, 1992, track 3). The rightness of his action is relative to his current situation. Egoism is also present in this stage. Aladdin only worries about his situation and not about harming others such as the merchant he stole food from in the market place. He is motivated by his own self-actions.

After outrunning the guards, Aladdin and his pet monkey Abu come across two young orphans sorting through garbage for food. Aladdin, saddened by the sight, gives his stolen bread to the starving children. Then Aladdin hears commotion coming from the streets. He weaves his way among the crowds in time to see a new suitor for the princess making his way into Agrabah. As Aladdin watches from the street, the orphans run into the street and the incoming prince almost tramples the two children. Disgusted and angered, the prince pulls out his whip to discipline the orphans. Aladdin intervenes and the prince kicks the street rat into the mud for his efforts. Aladdin’s intervention to save the children showed virtue characteristics. His acts showed concern for oneself and others.

The next day, Aladdin spots a beautiful girl in the marketplace. He watches her take an apple from a merchant’s cart and hands it to a hungry boy. The owner asks the girl to pay for the fruit, but she has no money. Therefore, he threatens to cut off her arm. Aladdin intervenes describing the girl as his mentally unstable sister. The girl plays along and the two escape back to Aladdin’s home. Again, Aladdin shows signs of virtue ethics here. Virtue overrides egoism based on the generosity of his action. Charitable actions are not associated with egoism.

Shortly after getting to know one another, the guards come to take the girl. She reveals herself as Princess Jasmine and demands they let Aladdin go free. The apologetic guards explain how they are following the orders of Jafar, the sultan’s trusted advisor and cannot free the boy.

Relativism sticks out in prominence due to Aladdin's belief that his actions are just. Relativists believe that if their actions are correct, then they chose the moral option. Aladdin believes stealing and lying are actions needed to survive during this stage. The rightness of his actions are relative to his situation.

Call to Adventure

During the Call to Adventure, Aladdin prominently portrays egoistic traits. The guards toss Aladdin into the dungeon where an old man approaches him telling of a cave of wonders holding treasures beyond his wildest dreams. The old man tells Aladdin it holds enough riches to impress the princess. Aladdin accepts the call to adventure but only after the old man, who is revealed as Jafar in disguise, tells Aladdin of the golden rule, "whoever has the gold, makes the rules" (Clements, Musker & Clements, Musker, 1992). He knows there is no way out of the dungeon unless he accepts the old man's quest. He only seeks to better his current position by escaping the dungeon and attempting to impress the princess with stolen riches. His own self-motivation drives his decision making process during this stage in the hero's journey.

Crossing the First Threshold

Aladdin crosses the first threshold when he physically steps into the cave of wonders, symbolically entering into the unknown world. Egoism still predominantly motivates Aladdin. His search for the gold continues. The old man tells Aladdin to bring the lamp back and he can have all the leftover riches from inside the cave.

Meeting of the Mentor

Genie serves as Aladdin's mentor throughout the film. After stealing the lamp, Aladdin becomes trapped inside the Cave of Wonders. Still holding the lamp, he rubs it and frees an entrapped genie. Genie appears, granting Aladdin three wishes. Aladdin tricks Genie into

helping them escape the cave flying on a magic carpet without using a wish. Still motivated by egoistic traits, Aladdin lies and cheats his way into bettering his current position.

Tests, Allies, Enemies

All throughout this stage, Aladdin predominantly remains an egoist. Once out of the cave, Aladdin promises to use the last of his three wishes to set Genie free. Using his first, Aladdin wishes to transform from street rat into Prince Ali. Now disguised as royalty, Aladdin parades into Agrabah on a mission to court Jasmine. He now lies to get his way which continues his journey down a path of egoism.

In the next scene, Aladdin consults with Genie about his relationship with Jasmine. Genie advises him to tell the truth. Aladdin then says, "If Jasmine found out I was a crummy street rat, she'd laugh" (Clements, Musker & Clements, Musker, 1992). Aladdin exits the conversation by riding his magic carpet up to Jasmine's balcony. Initially, she refuses to speak to him, but as she takes a second glance at him she asks, "Wait, wait, do I know you" (Clements, Musker & Clements, Musker, 1992)? She asks if he is the boy from the market place. Aladdin lies keeping the truth about their past a secret. Aladdin ignores his mentor and focuses on bettering his own current position. Unaware of the harm his lies may cause, Aladdin continues to portray signs of egoism.

After some convincing, Jasmine agrees to go on a magic carpet ride with Aladdin. While sitting on a rooftop, Jasmine calls Aladdin's bluff and catches him in a lie. He admits to being the guy in the marketplace. When asked why he lied, Aladdin covers with another lie, "I sometimes dress as a commoner, um, to escape the pressures of palace life. But I-I really am a prince" (Clements, Musker & Clements, Musker, 1992). Egoism remains strong here. He

remains motivated by his own self-interest and continues lying to get his way. Even when Jasmine catches him in the act, he covers up with another lie.

When they return home, Aladdin drops Jasmine off onto the balcony of the palace. Just as she goes out of sight, the guards capture Aladdin and Jafar orders them to drown the street rat. Tied up and underwater, Aladdin calls on Genie by making a final lunge to rub the lamp. Genie appears and saves him from drowning, exhausting Aladdin's second wish. Back in Agrabah, Aladdin appears and explains to everyone how Jafar tried to have him killed. Jafar escapes and the Sultan begins the wedding planning for Jasmine and Aladdin. Sultan explains how they will be wed and Aladdin will become Sultan. Aladdin looks guilt stricken after Sultan says, "Yes, a fine upstanding youth like yourself, a person of your unimpeachable moral character is exactly what this kingdom needs" (Clements, Musker & Clements, Musker, 1992). The wrongness of his actions begins to weigh on his conscience as the sultan explains how Aladdin will become sultan, though, egoism remains prominent. Aladdin had the chance to tell the truth of his past but he remained silent. Motivated by his own self-interest, he continues courting Jasmine by lying about his true identity.

In the next scene, Aladdin, depressed, goes back to the genie and explains how they want Aladdin to become the next sultan. Genie then asks Aladdin to fulfill his promise and set him free. Aladdin explains why he cannot set Genie free, "They want to make me sultan. No, they want to make Prince Ali sultan. Without you, I'm just Aladdin" (Clements, Musker & Clements, Musker, 1992). Genie responds by saying, "Fine, I understand. After all, you've lied to everyone else. Hey, I was beginning to feel left out." (Clements, Musker & Clements, Musker, 1992). Aladdin has now broken his promise to Genie.

Egoism remains prominent as Aladdin is not afraid to pursue his own interests at the expense of harming others. However, at the end, Aladdin decides he is going to tell Jasmine the truth. Thus, possibly making a change as the movie progresses. However, at this time, he remains focused on his own self-interests.

Approach to the Inmost Cave

During this stage, Aladdin transitions into a prominently virtue ethics perspective. He realizes the error of his ways and decides to tell Jasmine the truth about his identity. Unfortunately, interruptions by Sultan and Jafar prevent him from getting the chance. Before he can come clean, Iago, Jafar's pet bird, lures him out of his room and steals the lamp giving Jafar control of Genie. In the next scene, Sultan prepares to tell the kingdom of Jasmine's chosen suitor. Just before the announcement, Jafar appears making his first wish, to rule on high as sultan. Immediately following, Jafar uses his second wish to have Genie transform him into a powerful sorcerer. Though Aladdin never got the chance, his decision to tell the truth shows his transition into right being over right action. He knows that his choice will cause backlash; however, he knows it is the right action.

The Ordeal

Virtue ethics remain prominent during this stage. Back in Agrabah, Aladdin sneaks back into the palace. Seeing Aladdin, Jasmine tries to distract Jafar. As Aladdin attempts to steal back the lamp, Jafar intercedes. Using his sorcerer's power, he traps Jasmine in a sand timer, and transforms himself into a snake. As Jafar is poised to strike Aladdin, the street rat convinces Jafar to use his third wish, to become an all-powerful Genie. This gives Jafar phenomenal cosmic power, but traps him inside of the lamp. With Jafar trapped, Genie banishes him to the cave of wonders.

Aladdin defeated Jafar to save Princess Jasmine. He did it because it was the right thing to do. Therefore, virtue ethics remains prominent. Aladdin uses his cleverness and expert power of persuasion to overcome Jafar's power. While virtue ethics is prominent, consequentialism is also present. Though not his first priority, Aladdin's actions benefit the most amount of people. Though he focused on saving Princess Jasmine, he also saved the city of Agrabah.

The Reward

Aladdin's reward is winning the love of Jasmine. He apologizes for lying about being a prince and she replies, "I know why you did" (Clements, Musker & Clements, Musker, 1992). Jasmine tells Aladdin she loves him for who he is, not because he portrayed a prince. Aladdin puts his own interest aside during this stage portraying a predominant virtue ethics perspective. His acts showed concerns for himself and for Jasmine.

The Road Back

Genie reminds Aladdin he has one wish remaining. This time, instead of using the wish for his own purpose, Aladdin wishes the Genie free. This selfless act symbolizes Aladdin's complete transformation into the virtue ethics framework. Instead of wishing to be a prince, an act that would benefit himself, he does the right thing by sticking to his promise of setting Genie free. Aladdin can now be depended on to do the right thing.

Case 4: Summary of Findings

Aladdin prominently shows signs of relativism, egoism, and virtue ethics throughout his journey (see Figure 5). In the Ordinary World, Aladdin shows signs of a prominent relativist perspective along with slight presence of a virtue ethics mindset. However, it is short lived. During Call to Adventure, the Meeting with the Mentor, the Crossing of the First Threshold, and the Tests, Allies, Enemies stages, he acts within an egoistic framework. Then, during the

Approach to the Inmost Cave, he changes his perspective. He prominently displays qualities of a virtue ethics perspective and remains that way for the final four stages of his journey. Only during the Ordeal is any other framework present alongside virtue ethics. In that stage, Aladdin also portrays a presence of consequentialism decision-making. Beginning as a relativist and egoist, Aladdin understands his wrong doing and transitions into a virtue ethical framework. He learns to choose right being over right action and show concern for himself and others.

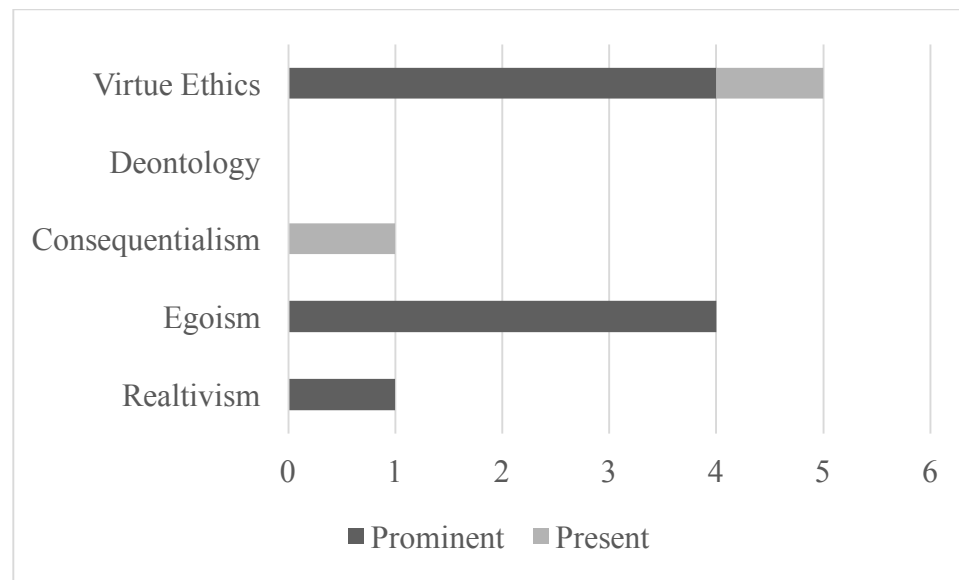


Figure 5. Aladdin's ethical frameworks. This figure illustrates the number of prominent and present ethical frameworks identified during Aladdin's hero's journey.

Case 5: *The Lion King*

The Lion King (1994) is the fifth movie produced during the Disney Renaissance era. In this film, Simba, a young lion cub, must learn what it takes to be a king and rule the Pride Lands (Hahn & Allers, Minkoff, 1994). Simba serves as the lead male protagonist of the film and the point of observation for this portion of the study.

Ordinary World

Simba is born into the Ordinary World as the son of Mufasa, the king of the Pride Lands. Mufasa's brother Scar is jealous of the first-born son since the prince becomes second in line for the throne, passing Scar. Mufasa tells Simba that he will become king one day, as long as he learns to act like a prince. Mufasa tells him "there is more to being a king than getting your way all the time" (Hahn & Allers, Minkoff, 1994). In disbelief, Simba says, "there's more" (Hahn & Allers, Minkoff, 1994)? Simba does not make a decision this early in the movie, however, he begins prominently showing egoistic traits. He believes that to be king means always getting his way and doing what he wants.

Call to Adventure

During the Call to Adventure, Simba lies to get his way, a strong trait of egoists. In a scene where Scar tells Simba of the elephant graveyard, Scar says, "Only the bravest lions go there" (Hahn & Allers, Minkoff, 1994). Simba claims his bravery is strong enough to handle the trip. To prove his bravery, he and his friend Nala make the trip to the graveyard. He already shows egoistic traits and only focuses on his own self-interest. His prominently egoistic perspective grows stronger as he puts Nala in harm's way just to better his current position. He believes that to be king means to be brave. Therefore, he is willing to put Nala and himself in danger just to prove his importance.

Unbeknownst to them, Scar orders his two henchmen hyenas to kill Simba and Nala. Trapped, the hyenas move to kill the two young cubs. Just before the hyenas strike, Mufasa intervenes, scaring them away. Angry and disappointed, Mufasa lectures Simba on the way back home. Simba lied to get his way and showed his egoistic prominence.

Refusal of the Call

Simba continues to prominently show egoistic traits at this stage of the story. The Refusal of the Call occurs when a stampede tramples and kills Mufasa. Mufasa's death means Simba is now king. However, Simba blames himself for Mufasa's death. Exploiting this vulnerability, Scar tells Simba to run away and never return. Simba, sad and crying, runs away from the Pride Lands. The young prince believes he is bettering his current position by running away. Instead of stepping up and acting like a king, he runs away from his problems to avoid confrontation.

Timon and Pumba come across Simba passed out from exhaustion in the desert. They take him to an oasis and nurse him back to health. When he awakens, he tells Timon and Pumba he cannot go back to the Pride Lands. With egoism prominent, there are no other frameworks present during this stage.

Crossing the First Threshold

Simba crosses the threshold by adapting to his new lifestyle in the jungle with Timon and Pumba. He only worries about himself, not the life he left behind. Therefore, egoism remains prominent. Giving up his duties as rightful king, he only worries about his own self-interests.

Tests, Allies, Enemies

During this stage, Simba remains focused on his own self-interests. Back in the jungle, a lioness chases Timon and Pumba until Simba intercedes. After a brief fight, Simba realizes the lioness is Nala. She tells him everyone thinks he's dead. Nala attempts to convince Simba to return home and take back the kingdom from Scar. He explains his fear of going back because of what happened to Mufasa.

After Nala and Simba become reacquainted, she explains that no one blames him for the accident, and everyone would be happy to see him return as king. She tells him of Scar's reign and how he let the hyenas take over the Pride Lands. Simba claims he cannot go back to Pride Rock. He is not worried about saving the people of the Pride Lands, only on what they might think of him if he returned as Mufasa's killer. Therefore, Simba still prominently portrays an egoistic framework. Even after Nala tells him of the way Scar is treating his people, Simba's self-interest motivates his actions.

After arguing back and forth, Simba angrily walks away from their conversation. As Simba sits reflecting, Rafiki arrives and guides Simba to look into pool of water where Simba sees Mufasa's face. Rafiki, now mentoring Simba, explains how Mufasa lives inside of the young prince, guiding the way.

Shortly after, Mufasa appears in the stars and tells Simba, "You have forgotten who you are and so have forgotten me. Look inside yourself Simba. You are more than what you have become. You must take your place in the Circle of Life. You are my son and the one true king. Remember who you are" (Hahn & Allers, Minkoff, 1994). Rafiki says the past can hurt but you can run from it or learn from it. No other frameworks are present during this stage, but there is foreshadowing of a transition into a deontological framework.

Approach to the Inmost Cave

After meeting with Nala and Rafiki, Simba portrays a predominately deontological framework. It becomes his duty to return as king of the Pride Lands and restore peace. He is the rightful heir and must take back his seat on the throne. Rafiki returns to the jungle and tells Nala, Timon, and Pumba of Simba's plans to return as king. Just as Simba reaches the Pride

Lands, Nala, Timon, and Pumba catch up to view how Scar and the hyenas destroyed the lands. The consequences no longer drive Simba's actions, only his duty as king.

The Ordeal

During the Ordeal, Simba continues to portray a deontological framework. Back in the Pride Lands, Simba confronts Scar. He demands his uncle to step down as king, but Scar proceeds to tell the Pride how Simba caused the stampede killing Mufasa. Simba admits fault, but explains it was an accident. He remains duty focused over worrying about the consequences of his actions.

With Simba distracted, Scar attempts to push him over a cliff but Simba digs his claws into the rock ledge. While hanging on the edge, Scar reveals to Simba he killed Mufasa, not Simba. The news gives Simba a burst of adrenaline as he climbs up the ledge, pouncing on Scar. Simba forces Scar to admit his killing of Mufasa. As he confesses, the hyenas gang up on Simba, freeing Scar. Simba shakes them off and gives chase to his uncle.

Simba corners Scar at the top of Pride Rock. Scar begins to blame the hyenas for everything, explaining it was their idea. After another brief scuffle, Simba flips Scar over the side of a cliff. At the bottom, the hyenas attack Scar after overhearing him blame them for everything. After Scar's death, the hyenas run away with their tails between their legs, leaving the Pride Lands.

The Road Back

After the battle, the hyenas ran away, Simba returned as king, and the Pride Lands begin their return to normalcy. Simba decides to accept his birthright to the throne, therefore, he remained predominately duty-focused.

Case 5: Summary of Findings

Simba only displayed two prominent ethical frameworks throughout the entire film (see Figure 6). For the first half of the movie, his decision-making abilities stem from an egoistic perspective. He only acts to better his current position and is not afraid of harming others to get his way. Then, during the Approach to the Inmost Cave, he transitions into a deontological framework. He returns to his rightful place as king of Pride Rock and remains in this perspective through the remaining six stages of the hero's journey, though he only makes decisions in three of the six. Simba learned to accept his responsibilities as the rightful heir and stepped up to be king of his pride. He leaves his egoistic ways in the past after learning how a king should act. The only stage where Simba presents another ethical perspective is during the Ordeal where he shows some signs of a consequentialism perspective.

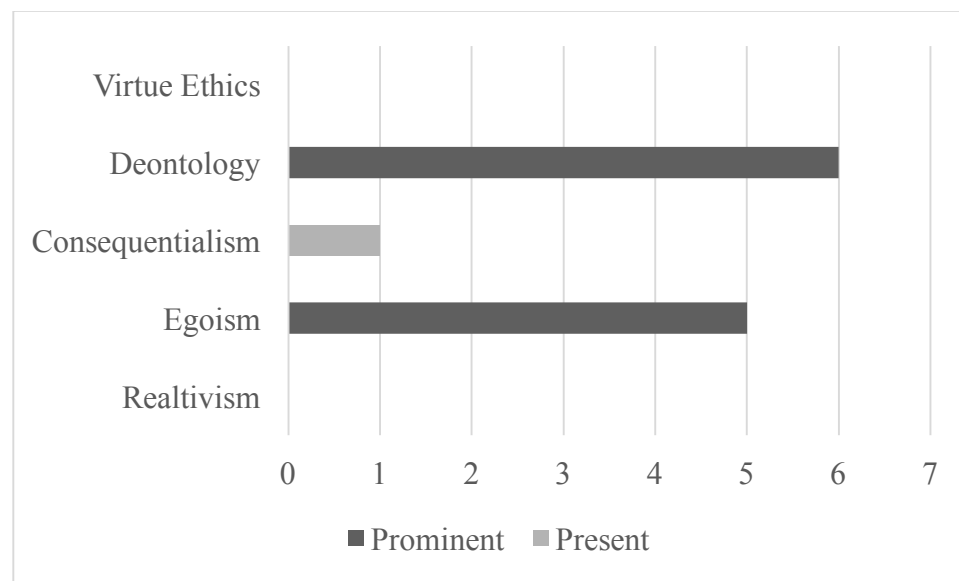


Figure 6. Simba's ethical frameworks. This figure illustrates the number of prominent and present ethical frameworks identified during Simba's hero's journey.

Case 6: *Pocahontas*

Disney produced *Pocahontas* in 1995 as the sixth movie of their renaissance era. This fictional story follows the adventure of two real historical figures, Pocahontas and John Smith (Pentecost & Gabriel, Goldberg, 1995). Together, they find love during a time where Native Americans and English colonists are at war. With the help of Grandmother Willow, the two must show Pocahontas' father, Chief Powhatan, that not all settlers are looking for war, and keep Governor Ratcliffe from murdering Pocahontas' tribe. John Smith serves as the lead male character in the film, however, he is not the lead protagonist. His role as the deuteragonist means he is the second most important in the film; therefore, he does not appear in every stage throughout the movie.

Ordinary World

The story opens with Captain John Smith boarding the ship in England before they set sail for the new world. As John enters the ship, the crew talks about him, "you can't fight Indians without John Smith" (Pentecost & Gabriel, Goldberg, 1995). Overhearing them, he responds, "That's right, I'm not about to let you boys have all the fun" (Pentecost & Gabriel, Goldberg, 1995). John seems poised and arrogant. After setting sail, their ship runs into a bad storm that causes Thomas, a fellow crewmember, to fall overboard. John immediately jumps in to save Thomas. The crew tosses them a life boat and they climb back aboard the ship. Another crewmember says, "Well done Smith" (Pentecost & Gabriel, Goldberg, 1995). He replies, "Of course, you'd all do the same for me" (Pentecost & Gabriel, Goldberg, 1995). John displays right being over right action. Therefore, he predominantly shows characteristics of a virtue ethical framework. Initially seeming egoistic, he shows virtue by saving Thomas because it was the

right thing to do. He assumes everyone else in the crew would do the same for him if he fell into the water.

Crossing the First Threshold

John predominately displays a virtue ethics perspective during this stage. While scouting the new world, John comes across Pocahontas. Jumping from behind a waterfall, he raises his gun to shoot her, but overcome by her beauty, he immediately lowers his weapon. He chose right being over right action by sparing Pocahontas's life. She was no threat to this life. Pocahontas crosses the first threshold when she appears to John Smith and takes his hand. John's acts show concern for himself and others.

Tests, Allies, Enemies

During this stage, John continues to prominently show characteristics of a virtue ethics perspective. His acts show concern for himself and others. Later in the film, he sneaks away from camp to find Pocahontas. After finding her, they seek out Grandmother Willow. Grandmother Willow reveals herself to John Smith. Then, two of John's crewmembers are heard shouting in search of their captain. Grandmother Willow spooks them away and Pocahontas and John agree to meet again later that night by Grandmother Willow.

That evening, both Pocahontas and John Smith sneak out to meet one another. Thomas spots John leaving. Governor Ratcliffe, the story's main antagonist, orders Thomas to follow John and shoot any savages along the way. When John meets Pocahontas, he tells her of the settler's plan to attack her village. In turn, Pocahontas reveals her tribe is also preparing for war. Pocahontas, with the help of Grandmother Willow convinces John to meet with her father, the chief. He knew telling her the battle plans was the right thing to do. His act showed concern for Pocahontas and her tribe.

In this scene, John and Pocahontas share their first kiss. However, they did not know both Thomas and Kocoum would witness their embrace. Kocoum, filled with rage, attempts to kill John. Thomas intervenes by shooting and killing Kocoum. This angers Pocahontas. John orders Thomas to get back to camp. Warriors from the village appear and capture John, believing he is responsible for Kocoum's death. John sacrifices himself to save Thomas' life.

Back in settler's camp, Thomas reports John's capture and a plan is put in place to rescue their captain from the savages. In the Indian village, Chief Powhatan sentences John to death at sunrise. Later that night, Pocahontas goes to John and apologizes for getting him in trouble. John explains he is a better person for having met Pocahontas.

John informed Pocahontas of the settler's plans to attack and sacrificed himself for Thomas by taking the blame for Kocoum's death. When talking with Pocahontas, he exclaimed, "I'd rather die tomorrow than live a hundred years without knowing you" (Pentecost & Gabriel, Goldberg, 1995). He took the blame for Thomas because it was the right thing to do. Thomas was just following orders. This sacrifice prominently portrays traits of a virtue ethics perspective. John can be depended on to do the right thing when posed with an ethical dilemma.

The Ordeal

As the settlers and Indians lower their weapons, Ratcliffe grabs a rifle and attempts to shoot Powhatan. John pushes Powhatan out of the way, taking the bullet. The shot is not fatal, but John must return to England for medical attention. John remains in the virtue ethics perspective during this stage. His saving Powhatan shows he can be depended on to do the right thing.

The Reward

Powhatan tells John that he is always welcome in their village, calling him a brother. Acceptance and the love of Pocahontas are the rewards for surviving death. The settlers and Indians are no longer enemies. John, having to go back to England, tells Pocahontas to come with him on the journey. John wants to stay behind, but he knows he must go back for medical attention. John remains in the virtue ethics framework. He continues to choose right being over right action.

Case 6: Summary of Findings

In *Pocahontas*, John Smith appears in eight of the 12 stages and displays characteristics of the virtue ethics perspective in five of the stages (see Figure 7). Beginning in the ordinary world, John displays traits of a virtue ethical framework. He chooses the best action over consequence by saving a fellow crew member from drowning. After the first stage, John Smith does not show up again until the crossing of the first threshold. When he does, he continues to prominently portray characteristics of the virtue ethics perspective. From there, John remains in this framework throughout the final stages of his journey. John Smith never portrays any other ethical perspective other than virtue ethics.

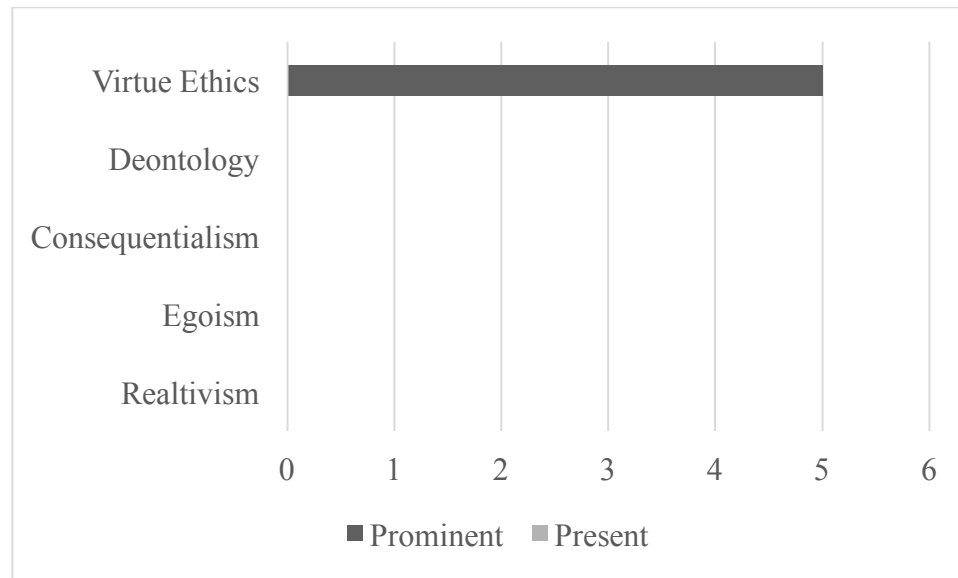


Figure 7. John Smith’s ethical frameworks. This figure illustrates the number of prominent and present ethical frameworks identified during John Smith’s hero’s journey.

Case 7: The Hunchback of Notre Dame

The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1996) marked the seventh movie of the Disney Renaissance Era. Loosely adapted from Victor Hugo’s novel, the story follows Quasimodo, the cathedral’s physically deformed bell-ringer, Esmeralda, a local gypsy woman, Frollo, a judge who looks to rid Paris of gypsies, and Phoebus, the captain of Frollo’s guard (Hahn & Trousdale, Wise, 1996). Quasimodo serves as the lead male protagonist of the film and the point of observation for this portion of the study.

Call to Adventure

Quasimodo displays egoistic traits motivated by self-interest during the Call to Adventure. One day, Quasi overlooks the town festival with his three gargoyle friends, Victor, Hugo, and Laverne. He expresses interest in joining the festivities but doubts himself due to his physical abnormality. Just as he gains the courage to go down, Frollo enters and explains how the outside world rejects people that are different. However, Quasimodo decides to sneak out

and attend the festival anyway. He believes spending one day down there will satisfy his need to explore the city and experience the culture. Quasimodo focuses on his own needs, not heeding the advice of his master. These are signs of an egoist.

Refusal of the Call

At first, Quasi refuses to go down to the festival because of his physical abnormality. The gargoyles instill the courage in him to attend the festival until Frollo enters the bell tower and discourages Quasi from attending. However, the dissuasion does not last. Coinciding with the last stage, Quasimodo retains his prominent egoist perspective. After ignoring the warnings from his master, Quasi attends the festivals of fools.

Meeting with the Mentor

The three gargoyles, Hugo, Victor, and Laverne, serve as the mentors for Quasimodo throughout the movie. Hugo, who has the most faith in Quasimodo, is the comic relief of the three. Victor is more cowardly than the other gargoyles and sometimes tries to talk Quasimodo out of doing the "wrong" thing. Lastly, Laverne is the mother figure of the three. She is the voice of reason and comfort for Quasimodo.

In this film, it is not clear when Quasimodo first met the gargoyles, though the audience meets them when they convince Quasi to attend the Festival of Fools. This stage occurs alongside the Call to Adventure. Therefore, Quasimodo remains an egoist.

Crossing the First Threshold

Quasimodo continues his egoist ways and attends the festival. There, he meets and immediately falls in love with Esmeralda, a beautiful gypsy. She takes him on stage to enter in the ugliest mask competition. However, once the townspeople realize Quasimodo's face is not a mask, they begin throwing rotten fruit and attempt to capture the ugly beast. Esmeralda

intervenes and stops the riot, freeing Quasimodo from the restraints placed on him by the mob. Frolo, watching from afar, realizes Quasimodo's deceit. Then, he orders the capture of Esmeralda. Quasimodo, now terrified after being ridiculed, returns to the cathedral bell tower. Self-interests continue to motivate Quasimodo's actions even against the advice of his master.

Tests, Allies, Enemies

Quasimodo portrays a predominant virtue ethic framework during this stage. Running from Frolo, Esmerelda claims sanctuary in the cathedral. While inside, she searches for Quasimodo in the towers. After finding him, he shows her around the tower even though his master ordered her capture. He knew it was the right thing to do.

Traits of deontology are also present early in this stage. Quasimodo wants her to stay, but Esmerelda explains how she cannot stay locked up in the cathedral; she needs to be free outside of the stone walls. Esmeralda then asks Quasimodo why he stays. He explains how Frolo saved and raised him as a child, and claims the cathedral as home; he has too many responsibilities to leave it behind. He declines stating he will never go back outside of the cathedral walls; the bell tower is where he belongs due to his duties as the bell ringer. This action shows Quasimodo's deontological tendencies present alongside his virtue ethics. He is duty focused over consequence.

However, Quasimodo agrees to help Esmerelda escape Notre Dame, even though Frolo ordered her capture. As a gift for saving her, she gives him a map to the gypsy hideout, the Court of Miracles. She tells him to use it if he ever needs sanctuary. He chooses right being over the right action. These actions further align with his virtue ethics perspective.

A few scenes later, Esmerelda rescues Phoebus from the Seine River and takes him to Quasimodo for help. Quasi agrees to harbor the injured captain. Before she leaves, Esmeralda

and Phoebus share a kiss. Immediately, Quasimodo's heart breaks, but he still agrees to keep Phoebus safe. He hides Phoebus even though they share the same feelings for Esmerelda.

When Quasimodo hears Frollo coming, he hides Phoebus under the table. Frollo tells Quasimodo of his plan to attack the Court of Miracles with a thousand men. After Frollo leaves, Phoebus asks Quasimodo to help him find the Court of Miracles before Frollo can attack. Quasimodo initially says no, but he knows it is the right thing to do.

Approach to the Inmost Cave

Quasimodo displays traits of the virtue ethics perspective in this stage. His acts show concern for oneself and others. He left behind his deontological duties to save Esmeralda. After finding the Court of Miracles, Clopin, the leader of the gypsies, mistakes Quasimodo and Phoebus for spies and sentences them to death by hanging. Esmerelda intervenes saving Phoebus and Quasimodo. Esmerelda thanks Phoebus who says all the credit should go to Quasimodo. Just then, Frollo and his men ambush the Court of Miracles. Frollo secretly followed Phoebus and Quasimodo who led the army to the gypsy hideout.

Quasimodo also shows signs of subtle consequentialism here. He chooses the best action for the most amounts of people, but the virtue ethics is more prominent because the saving of the rest of the gypsies only occurs because Quasi wants to save Esmerelda from Frollo's attack.

The Ordeal

During the Ordeal, virtue ethics remain prominent. Frollo captures Esmerelda and locks her up and sentencing her to burn at the stake. In the bell tower, Frollo chains and locks up Quasimodo. When the gargoyles encourage Quasimodo to break free, depressed, he wants to be left alone. When Quasimodo sees Frollo set the fire, emotion takes charge and he breaks free from his bondage and swings down to save Esmeralda. Freeing her, he carries her up into the

bell tower, claiming sanctuary. Quasimodo can be depended on to do the right thing. He chooses right being over right action by breaking free from his chains put on by Frollo to save Esmerelda.

Reward

Quasimodo's reward for surviving death is becoming the hero by saving Esmerelda. As he swung in to save her, the gypsies and townsfolk cheered him on. Saving her was the right thing to do.

The Road Back

Back in the bell tower, Frollo breaks through the door and attempts to stab Quasimodo. Overpowering Frollo, Quasimodo takes Esmerelda to safety. Frollo reveals to Quasimodo the truth about his mother's death. During the fight with Frollo, Quasimodo starts to slip, but Esmeralda keeps him from falling. Then in a final attempt to kill Esmeralda, Frollo loses his footing and falls from atop the cathedral to his death.

Quasimodo still portrays traits of the virtue ethics framework. He had a chance to kill Frollo, but held back because he knew it was not the right action. He again saved Esmerelda because it was the right thing to do. He loved her, but knew her heart belonged to Phoebus. His acts again showed concern for oneself and others.

The Resurrection

Virtue ethics remain prominent during the Resurrection. Quasimodo slips from Esmeralda's grasp and falls from the cathedral tower. Phoebus then saves him by catching Quasi on a lower floor. Quasi, though in love with Esmerelda, knows Phoebus and her are destined to be together. Instead of fighting for her love, he gives them his blessing by placing her hand into Phoebus'. He knew it was the right thing to do. He cares more for Esmeralda's happiness than

his own pleasure. He again chose right being over right action. He no longer focuses on his own motivations. Instead, his acts show concern for oneself and others. Therefore, he remains prominently in the virtue ethics framework.

Return with the Elixir

Esmerelda and Phoebus leave the cathedral to the cheers of the townspeople. Realizing that Quasi remained behind, she goes back and extends her hand calling him to come forward. As he emerges from the darkness, the town gasps, but a child from the crowd walks up the steps to give him a hug. Everyone then cheers for Quasimodo, accepting him for who he is. The movie ends with Quasi on the shoulders of some townsfolk as they parade him around town.

Quasimodo remains in the virtue ethics perspective during this stage. He came out of the bell tower at the request of Esmeralda. He was afraid of how the town would treat him, but he emerged from the cathedral anyway. Quasimodo is now the hero of the city and can be depended on to do the right thing.

Case 7: Summary of Findings

Quasimodo prominently shows signs of egoism and virtue ethics throughout his journey (see Figure 8). Although he does appear in all 12 stages of the hero's journey, he does not make a decision during stage one, the Ordinary World. In the next four stages, he displays characteristics of an egoistic perspective. Then, during the Tests, Allies, Enemies stage, he transitions into a prominent virtue ethical framework with some characteristics of a consequentialist. Including the Tests, Allies, Enemies stage, Quasimodo prominently remains in the virtue ethical framework in the final seven of the 12 stages. He stops focusing on his own needs and concentrates on the needs of others. The only other stage where Quasimodo presents

another ethical perspective is during the Approach to the Inmost Cave where displays some characteristics of a consequentialist.

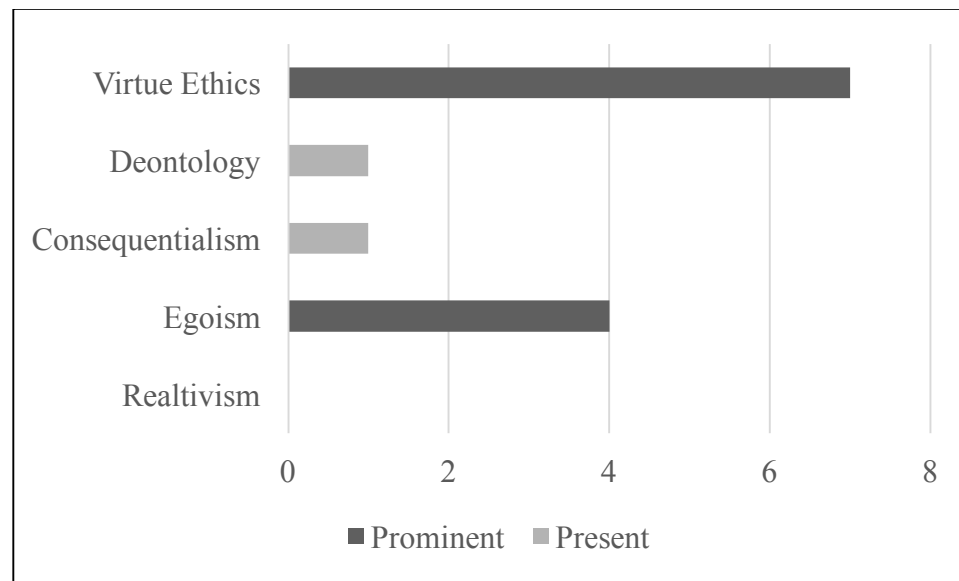


Figure 8. Quasimodo's ethical frameworks. This figure illustrates the number of prominent and present ethical frameworks identified during Quasimodo's hero's journey.

Case 8: *Hercules*

Hercules (1997) marks the eighth movie produced during the Disney Renaissance era. This film takes characters from Greek mythology and transfers them into a story fit for a family friendly audience. Hercules serves as the lead male protagonist of the film and the point of observation for this portion of the study.

Ordinary World

As a young boy in the Ordinary World, Hercules show signs of a predominant virtue ethics perspective. He is born as a god to Zeus and Hera. Then Hades devises a plan to kidnap and kill Hercules. Pain and Panic take him to the ordinary world where they are interrupted and forced to leave Hercules in the ordinary world. There he grows up with his earthly mother and father. People in town think Hercules is abnormal, calling him a freak due to his super strength.

He is very clumsy and tends to cause more harm than good when he tries to help people around town. After being ridiculed, Hercules later claims, "Sometimes I feel like I really don't belong here. Like I'm supposed to be someplace else" (Dewey, Clements, Musker, Tobin, N & Clements, Musker, 1997). Hercules always attempts to do the right thing. However, his clumsiness and super strength oftentimes get him into more trouble.

Call to Adventure

During the Call to Adventure, Hercules transitions to a predominantly egoist perspective. His adoptive parents tell him about his past. They explain how they found him wearing the medallion of the gods. Hercules, now curious about his heritage, sets off for the Temple of the Gods. Hurting others does not affect his decision to leave his adoptive parents' home. They are visibly upset, but Hercules only focuses on finding out more about his past. At the temple, he prays to Zeus. Then, To Hercules' surprise, the God of thunder appears and tells the boy of his royal blood line. Zeus further explains how only gods can live on Mount Olympus. All Hercules has to do is become a true hero and he can return home. At this time, Hercules' self-interests motivate his actions.

Refusal of the Call

When Zeus appears, Hercules initially attempts to run away, but Zeus grabs him and brings him back into the temple. Hercules briefly second-guesses his quest until Zeus tells him the full story. Then Hercules accepts the call to adventure and seeks out Philoctetes, the hero trainer.

Egoism remains prominent during this stage as Hercules seeks to better his current position in life. His goal is to return to Mount Olympus as a god. Therefore, he agrees to find Philoctetes and complete his training.

Meeting with the Mentor

Egoism remains prominent as Hercules meets his mentor. He finds and attempts to persuade Philoctetes to train him. Phil initially denies the request, but after some convincing, he agrees to help the demigod. Hercules is motivated by his own self-interest during this stage. He is not concerned with Phil's retirement; all he cares about is becoming a god.

Crossing the First Threshold

When he crosses the first threshold, Hercules displays prominent signs of an egoist with traits of virtue ethics also present. The stage begins when Phil takes Hercules to Thebes, a town known for its troubled population. After Hercules' initial training, this is the point of no return. Hercules must now put his training into action. On their way to Thebes, they come across a damsel in distress. Hercules swoops in and defeats the beast cornering a beautiful woman, Meg.

Hercules' motivation for fighting the beast is not to save the woman, but to become a hero. Saving the damsel in distress is simply a consolation prize. He defeats the enemy to continue his quest, but he also saves Meg because it is the right thing to do.

Tests, Allies, Enemies

Hercules continues to work on increasing his current position during this stage. His big test comes when Meg tells him that there are two kids trapped in the gorge. Hercules jumps at the chance to be a hero and flies off with Meg to the location of the children. What Hercules did not know is that the children were Pain and Panic in disguise and the story was a plot by Hades to kill Hercules. After Hercules saves the disguised Pain and Panic, Hades sends a beast to threaten the people of Thebes. After some initial trouble, Hercules defeats the beast. As the stage progresses, he continues to defeat every trial Hades throws.

Though he keeps winning, Hercules has not yet become a true hero. He only acts heroic to become a true hero, not to fight for the people of Thebes. Zeus appears telling him that "just because you are famous does not mean you are a hero" (Dewey, Clements, Musker, Tobin, N & Clements, Musker, 1997). Hercules is then ready to give up until Phil talks him back up. As the story progresses, Meg and Hercules begin falling in love.

Also during this stage, Hercules chooses love over the advice of his mentor. When Phil tries to tell Hercules of Meg's deceit, Hercules ignores the warning. He remains motivated by his own self-interest. Thus, he remains in the prominent egoist perspective. Consequentialism is also present during this stage. As a byproduct of his egoism, Hercules saves the city of Thebes from many beasts and monsters. Therefore, his actions also benefit the most amount of people. He does choose the best possible option, however, his self-interest is the motivating factor.

Approach to the Inmost Cave

Hercules remains an egoist during the approach. Phil leaves Hercules after the boy hero ignores his advice. During this time, Hades captures Meg and approaches Hercules. Hades offers to free Meg if Hercules gives up his strength for 24 hours. Hercules initially hesitates, but agrees to the terms after Hades promises that Meg will remain unharmed. This only benefits Hercules' position; he wants to save Meg for his own benefit, not because it is the right thing to do. After Hades takes Hercules' strength, he reveals the truth about Meg and her alliance with Hades.

The Ordeal

After losing his strength, Hercules still portrays prominently egoistic traits. With Hercules weakened, Hades releases the Titans to attack Mount Olympus. Additionally, he unleashes a giant cyclops on the city of Thebes. Without his power, the cyclops outmatches

Hercules. Overcome by depression, he refuses to fight back against the cyclops. No longer caring about the people of Thebes, he remains fixated on his own problems and not on the goodness of others.

Now free from Hades' control, Meg sets off to find Phil. When she finds him, she convinces him to return and help Hercules. Back in Thebes, they find the boy hero exhausted, bruised, and defeated by the cyclops. Seeing Phil, Hercules says, "You were right all along, Phil. Dreams are for rookies" (Dewey, Clements, Musker, Tobin, N & Clements, Musker, 1997). Phil motivates Hercules to fight back by saying, "I'm ready to go the distance, are you" (Dewey, Clements, Musker, Tobin, N & Clements, Musker, 1997)? This insinuates that Hercules does not defeat the cyclops to save the city. Instead, he does it to complete his journey and become a true hero. Without his strength, Hercules uses strategy to defeat the cyclops, causing the beast to fall over the edge of a cliff. As the cyclops falls, a pillar breaks free toppling towards Hercules. Meg rushes in, pushing him out of the way, taking the impact of the pillar as it hits the ground.

As in the tests, allies, and enemies stage, consequentialism is also present during the Ordeal. Still trying to become a hero, Hercules again saves the city of Thebes from the cyclops. Therefore, his actions also benefit the most amount of people. However, his self-interest is the motivating factor, not to save the people of Thebes.

Reward

Hercules' reward for surviving is Meg's love and the return of his super strength. Since the Reward occurred during the Ordeal, Hercules prominently remains an egoist during this stage. Also, consequentialism remains present since his actions saved the most amount of people.

Distressed, Hercules runs to Meg and lifts the collapsed pillar over his head. Part of the deal with Hades assured Meg's safety. Therefore, since the collapsing of the pillar causes harm to Meg, Hercules's strength returns. Kneeling by her side, Hercules asks Meg why she saved him. She responds by saying, "People always do crazy things when they're in love" (Dewey, Clements, Musker, Tobin, N & Clements, Musker, 1997). Hercules, speechless and almost apologetic, promises her everything will be alright. Then, Hercules rides Pegasus towards Mount Olympus.

The Road Back

During the Road Back, Hercules transitions into a prominent virtue ethics perspective. He sacrifices his own life in exchange for Meg's. Back in Mount Olympus, Hercules, along with Zeus and the other gods, defeat the Titans. Hades retreats, taunting Hercules with threats of killing Meg. Hercules rushes back to Meg, but she passes away just before he returns. In the next scene, Hercules busts through Hades' door in the underworld demanding Meg's freedom. Hercules offers his own soul in place of Meg's. Hades agrees, but only if Hercules can save her from the river of souls. To do so, Hercules must dive into the Styx, a river which quickly ages and kills mortals. Hercules reaches Meg's soul and brings her back to life. Hercules' selfless act completes his journey of becoming a true hero. He chose right being over right action and his act showed concern for others. Hercules returns to god form, leaves the Styx with Meg's soul, and defeats Hades. Hercules can now be depended on to do the right thing.

Return with the Elixir

During the return, Hercules remains in the virtue ethical framework. Zeus invites Hercules and Meg to Mount Olympus. Hercules' parents meet him at the gates. Zeus calls Hercules a "true hero," then says, "For a true hero isn't measure by the size of his strength, but by

the strength of his heart. Now at last, my son, you can come home"(Dewey, Clements, Musker, Tobin, N & Clements, Musker, 1997). After a brief hesitation, Hercules decides to remain on Earth with Meg. "I wish to stay on Earth with her. I finally know where I belong," he says (Dewey, Clements, Musker, Tobin, N & Clements, Musker, 1997). He makes the decision, not for his own self-interest, but for the greater good. He again chooses right being over right action by following his heart. He knew that living as a god would bring him immortal life, however, he would never be happy due to his love for Meg. He no longer wanted to be a true hero, he wants to live happily ever after with Meg.

Case 8: Summary of Findings

Hercules prominently shows signs of egoism and virtue ethics throughout his journey (see Figure 9). In stage 1, the Ordinary World, Hercules displays characteristics of a prominent virtue ethical framework. Then during the Call to Adventure, his motivations become self-involved and he prominently presents himself as an egoist and remains that way for eight of the 12 stages. During the Road Back, Hercules transitions to a prominent virtue ethical framework, where he stays for the final stages of his hero's journey. During the Crossing the First Threshold, Hercules also presents characteristics of a virtue ethics perspective. Lastly, during the Tests, the Ordeal, and the Reward stages, Hercules also slightly presents himself as a consequentialist. As a byproduct of focusing on his own best interest, he chooses options that save the most amount of people.

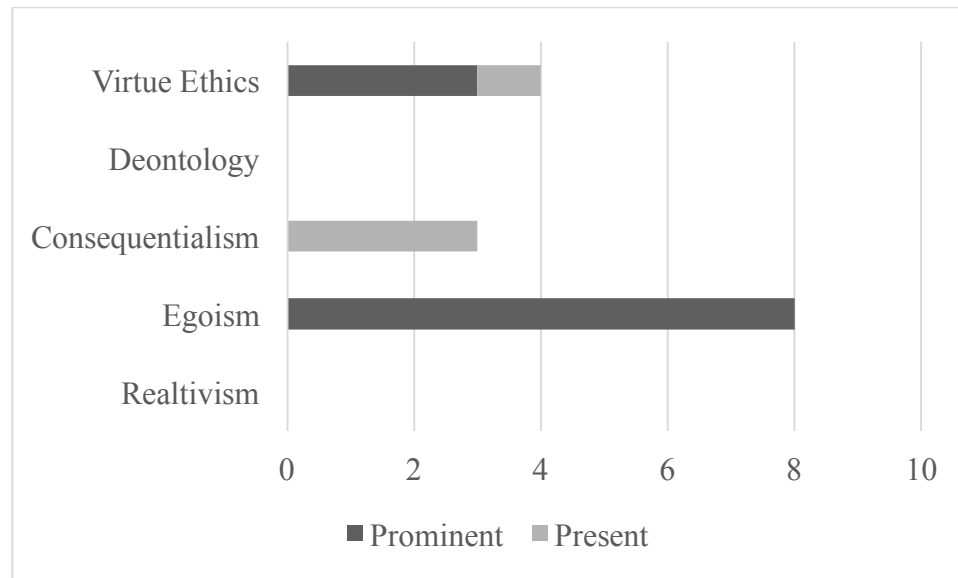


Figure 9. Hercules' ethical frameworks. This figure illustrates the number of prominent and present ethical frameworks identified during Hercules' hero's journey.

Case 9: *Mulan*

In 1998, Disney produced the ninth movie of their renaissance era, *Mulan*. In the film, Mulan disguises herself as a man and takes her father's place in the army. Along with her mentor Mushu, Mulan joins Captain Li Shang's army in an attempt to defeat Shan Yu and the Huns from taking over China (Coates & Cook, Bancroft, 1998). Captain Li Shang serves as the lead male character in the film, however, he is not the protagonist. His role as the tritagonist means he is the third most important in the film. Therefore, he does not appear in every stage throughout the movie. Observation points will occur at each stage of Mulan's hero's journey.

Crossing the First Threshold

The first threshold Mulan crosses is army training camp. This marks the first stage in which Li Shang appears. Captain Li Shang predominately portrays deontological traits during this stage. He is first shown after discussing strategy with his father, the army general. After their meeting, Shang is appointed Captain at the protest of Chi-Fu, the emperor's advisor. This

marks Shang's crossing of the threshold into his unknown world. Initially, he is excited by the opportunity to fulfill his duty as captain; however, he is discouraged after seeing his rag tag crew. Mulan, disguised as a man named Ping, begins her training as a soldier.

Though they are lacking talent, Li Shang agrees to mold his crew into soldiers. Though the task is daunting, he chooses duty focused over consequence. He could have requested a new group of men or declined the promotion. However, he rose to accept the challenge. Shang wanted to prove his worthiness by readying the men with Chi-Fu's approval. Virtue ethics is also present as Shang accepts his new position as captain.

Tests, Allies, Enemies

Shang transitions to a virtue ethics perspective during this stage. After molding them into a competent army, Shang goes to Chi-Fu for approval. Chi-Fu refuses to approve their service in battle despite Shang's protests. A letter arrives for Shang (supposedly from the general, but forged by Mushu, Mulan's guide and mentor). The letter requests Captain Shang's crew to join the army in battle.

Severely outnumbered, Shang prepares for a final stand against the Huns. At this point in the movie, Shang remains in the deontological framework. Mulan saves Shang who becomes caught in an avalanche. After the battle, Shang thanks Ping and accepts him as a trusted friend. While receiving treatment for her wounds, Mulan's identity as a woman is revealed. Though the law states a woman in the army is to be killed, Shang spares her, repaying the debt owed from when Mulan saved him from the avalanche.

According to the law, Shang should have killed Mulan. However, he knew it was not the right thing to do. Instead of killing her, he leaves her behind as they continue their march towards the Imperial City. Overall, Shang's action to spare Mulan's life was the right being over

right action. Therefore, Shang transitions to a virtue ethics perspective. If he remained deontological, he would have killed Mulan, but instead chose virtue ethical traits. At the end of the stage, virtue ethics are prominent; therefore, deontology moves to the present perspective in the Tests, Allies, and Enemies stage.

Approach to the Inmost Cave

During the approach, Shang continues to prominently portray a virtue ethical framework. Now in the Imperial City, Shang and his troops, sans Mulan, are to be honored for defeating the Huns. During the parade, Mulan confronts Shang telling him the Huns have entered the city. He refuses to believe her since she lied about her identity. However, as the Emperor honors Shang, several Huns kidnap the Emperor and barricade themselves in the palace. Shang and his men unsuccessfully attempt to break into the palace. Mulan approaches them with an idea that Shang initially dismisses, but then joins her as they sneak into the palace.

Shang let go of his own interests to follow Mulan's plan. Even though she was no longer in the army, he followed her to the best outcome. He no longer focuses on his duty as captain, but chooses the right being over right action.

The Ordeal

The Ordeal occurs during the battle with Shan Yu. Shan Yu almost kills Shang before Mulan interrupts the deathblow. Shan Yu then chases Mulan throughout the castle. She outsmarts Shan Yu, killing him with a firework cannon. Chi-Fu blames Mulan for a deliberate attempt on his life. Shang defends Mulan as the emperor interrupts their arguing. The emperor explains to them how Mulan saved him and the entire city from the Huns. The emperor then bows to Mulan followed by Shang, the trio, and the entire city. Their culture and Shang's military rank would normally keep Shang from bowing to a woman; however, he knows honoring Mulan

with a bow is the right thing to do. Therefore, Shang prominently remains in the virtue ethics perspective.

Return with the Elixir

Mulan returns home and attempts to give the sword and medal to her father. He sets them aside, telling Mulan, “the greatest gift is having you as a daughter” (Coates & Cook, Bancroft, 1998). Shortly after, Li Shang arrives at Mulan’s home to profess his love. Shang has trouble finding the right words to say. Mulan, reading the situation, invites him to stay for dinner, which he graciously accepts. Shang chose the right thing to do by riding to Mulan’s house. He knew he could never let her go. Thus, Shang finishes out the movie in the virtue ethical framework.

Case 9: Summary of Findings

In *Mulan*, Captain Li Shang only appears in five of the 12 stages. He prominently shows signs of Deontology and virtue ethics throughout his journey (see Figure 10). In his first appearance during the crossing of the first threshold, Shang prominently displays deontological traits. In the next stage, Tests, Allies, Enemies, he transitions into an egoist for the next 3 of 5 stages. Lastly, during the Return with the Elixir, Shang prominently displays characteristics of a virtue ethical framework.

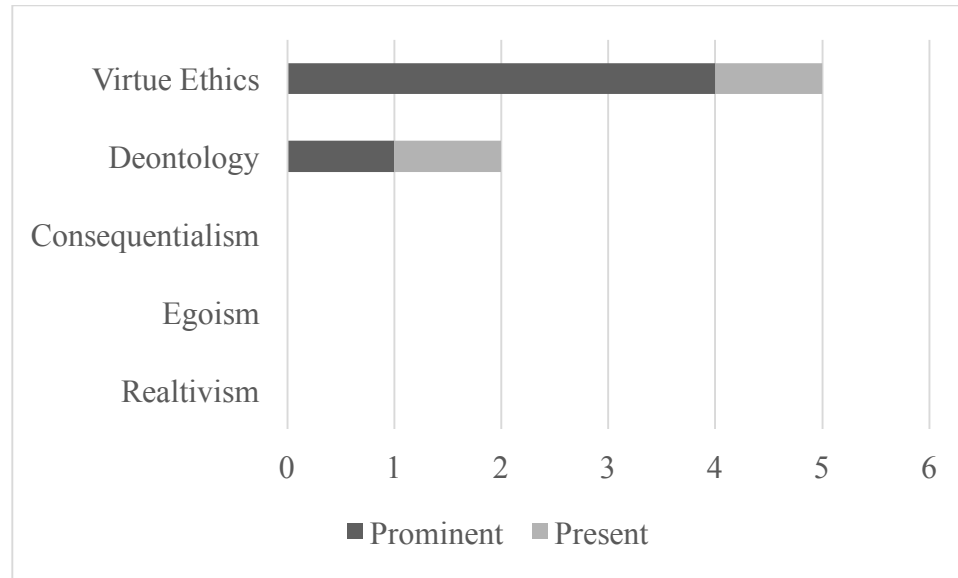


Figure 10. Captain Li Shang’s ethical frameworks. This figure illustrates the number of prominent and present ethical frameworks identified during Shang’s hero’s journey.

Case 10: Tarzan

Tarzan (1999) serves as the tenth and final movie of the Disney Renaissance Era. The film follows the human Tarzan, with Terk and Tantor, animals of the jungle, who must learn to live together as friends (Arnold & Lima, Buck, 1998). When English explorers Jane, Professor Porter, and Clayton arrive in the jungle, Tarzan must choose between the world he knows, and the unknown human world. Tarzan serves as the lead male protagonist of the film and the point of observation for this portion of the study.

Ordinary World

Initially, Tarzan portrays egoistic traits. His drive for acceptance motivates his actions. In the ordinary world, Kala, a gorilla who recently lost her baby, takes in Tarzan, and raises him as her own child with her husband Kerchak. As a young boy, Tarzan is unable to keep up with the other young gorillas. They cast him aside, but he desperately wants to earn their acceptance. Tarzan vows to become the best ape ever. After he grows up, Tarzan has fully acclimated to

living among the gorillas and the jungle. One day, a leopard attacks the band of gorillas. Sabor injures Kerchak, but Tarzan intervenes, killing the jungle cat. The entire band of gorillas including Kala, Terk, and Kerchak, cheer for Tarzan. Tarzan presents Kerchak Sabor's dead body, earning his respect. The family has now fully accepted Tarzan as their own kind.

Tarzan's egoism tends to get him in trouble. He causes a stampede just to show the other gorillas he was worthy. However, as he grows older, Tarzan took on a more prominent virtue ethical framework. He killed Sabor to save Kerchak and ultimately earn the respect of the band. Therefore, virtue ethics are prominent and egoism is present during this stage.

Call to Adventure

During the call, Tarzan remains in the virtue ethics perspective. After hearing gunshots, Tarzan sets out to find the source. Hiding in the grassy shadows, he comes across Clayton, Professor Porter, and Jane. When Jane gets into trouble with some baboons, Tarzan comes to her rescue. Tarzan's exposure to people of "his kind" makes him curious about life.

Tarzan rescued Jane because it was the right thing to do. He was not concerned with exposing himself, only saving her life. His acts showed concern for her well-being. Therefore, he remains in a prominent virtue ethics perspective.

Refusal of the Call

With the new human arrival, Tarzan now questions his past. Kerchak advises everyone to stay away from the humans as they may be a threat to the gorillas. Tarzan ignores Kerchak's advice and acting in his own best interests, travels back to Jane's camp. Thus, he transitions to an egoist. His self-interest motivates his actions.

Meeting with the Mentor

Kala serves as Tarzan's mentor, teaching him about his past and how to proceed through the future. Tarzan meets his mentor as an infant, before he made his egoist decision in the Ordinary World. Tarzan makes no decisions during this stage, therefore, no analysis can be done.

Crossing the First Threshold

During this stage, Tarzan displays characteristics of a virtue ethics perspective. The crossing of the first threshold occurs during the Call to Adventure. While exploring, Jane discovers and angers a group of baboons. Tarzan, spying in the shadows, swings in to save Jane from the monkeys. Tarzan carries Jane to safety, finding refuge among the treetops. In the tree marks the first time Tarzan ever interacted with another human. This symbolizes the crossing of the threshold into the unknown world.

He did the right thing by saving Jane from the baboons. His act showed concern for oneself and for others. He did not hesitate to save her, even though she is a complete stranger. This is not a transition back to virtue ethics since the crossing of the first threshold occurs during the Call to Adventure. No other actions occurred to alter his framework.

Tests, Allies, Enemies

Tarzan returns to egoism during this stage, only focusing on his own self interests. After saving her from the baboons, Tarzan takes Jane back to her camp site. When they arrive, Terk, Tantor, and other gorillas are trashing the camp. As Terk and Jane meet for the first time, Kerchak appears roaring and demanding the band to return home. Back in the jungle, Kerchak warns everyone about the danger of interacting with humans. This is where the Refusal of the Call intersects with the Tests, Allies, and Enemies stage. Tarzan angrily storms away after the scolding from Kerchak and returns to Jane's camp.

The next day, a boat arrives to take Jane, Porter, and Clayton back home to England. Tarzan and Jane are visibly saddened by the news but Tarzan claims he cannot go to England with Jane, and Jane refuses to stay behind with Tarzan. After Jane walks away crying, Clayton intervenes explaining to Tarzan that she would stay if he showed them the gorillas. Tarzan agrees and guides them to the gorilla home. Terk and Tantor distract Kerchak and lure him away from the band to keep him from harming the humans. However, Kerchak returns while the humans are still at the camp and attempts to attack. Tarzan intervenes allowing Jane, Porter, and Clayton to escape. He tackles Kerchak to save the humans shows his commitment to his new friends and his motivation from his own self-interest. After they leave, Kerchak confronts Tarzan, proclaiming, "I asked you to protect our family, and you betrayed us all" (Arnold & Lima, Buck, 1998). Tarzan, realizing the wrong that he has done, runs off into the jungle.

Approach to the Inmost Cave

During this phase, Tarzan still predominantly portrays egoistic traits. Kala takes Tarzan to the old tree house where she found him, and where his parents died. She explains she should have brought him here a long time ago and how she is not his biological mother. She tells him, "I just want you to be happy, whatever you decide" (Arnold & Lima, Buck, 1998). Tarzan puts on some of his father's clothes and tells Kala, "No matter where I go, you will always be my mother" (Arnold & Lima, Buck, 1998). She replies, "And you will always be in my heart" (Arnold & Lima, Buck, 1998). She is encouraging him to leave with Jane and Porter. Tarzan leaves the treehouse to go find Jane and Porter to join them on their trip back to London.

Even though it hurts Kala emotionally, Tarzan chooses to leave with Jane and Porter. Additionally, he does not say goodbye to Terk and Tantor, abandoning his past. In this stage, Tarzan remains focused on the actions that benefit his own self-interest.

The Ordeal

During this stage, Tarzan transitions to a predominant virtue ethics perspective. The ordeal occurs when Tarzan reaches the ship returning home. Clayton and the ship's crew capture Jane, Porter, and Tarzan. Clayton plans to capture the gorillas and sell them in England. Tarzan screams at Clayton before they throw him into a cage. Tantor, hearing Tarzan's cry, encourages Terk to go back. Terk, still upset, wants to leave Tarzan behind, but Tantor grabs Terk and jumps into the water after Tarzan.

In a scene back on the ship, Tarzan blames himself for their capturing and endangering the gorillas. He says, "I betrayed my family. Kerchak was right" (Arnold & Lima, Buck, 1998). Just then Tantor and Turk reach the ship and break Tarzan, Jane, and Porter free, Tarzan returns to the jungle just in time to stop Clayton from shooting Kerchak. Kerchak, surprised to see Tarzan, says, "You came back" (Arnold & Lima, Buck, 1998). Tarzan replies, "I came home" (Arnold & Lima, Buck, 1998).

As the fight progress, Clayton fires his gun at Kerchak, mortally wounding the gorilla. Tarzan lures Clayton into the tree tops of the jungle. At the top, the two briefly scuffle as Tarzan wrestles away Clayton's gun, lifting it aimed at Clayton. Clayton taunts Tarzan, "Be a man," he says (Arnold & Lima, Buck, 1998). Tarzan responds with, "Not a man like you" and smashes the gun against a tree branch (Arnold & Lima, Buck, 1998). He could have killed Clayton with the gun, but instead, chose to be the better man. He chose right being over right action.

Immediately, Clayton lunges at Tarzan, wielding a knife. They fall into a tangle of vines, and as Clayton attempts to free himself from the tangled mess, he inadvertently falls, hanging himself on the vine around his neck. Tarzan's actions showed concern for oneself and others as he attempted to save Clayton before falling to his death.

Back on the ground, Tarzan returns to Kerchak's side. Tarzan asks for Kerchak's forgiveness, but Kerchak responds by saying, "No, forgive me for not understanding that you have always been one of us. Our family will look to you now" (Arnold & Lima, Buck, 1998). With his dying breath, Kerchak calls Tarzan his son, finally accepting the boy as part of the gorilla family. Kerchak knows Tarzan can now be depended on to do the right thing. Thus, making him the leader of the family.

The Road Back

During the Road Back, Tarzan displays a predominant virtue ethics perspective. He accepts the new role as leader of the family, even though he initially planned to travel home with Jane. Kerchak never trusted Tarzan, always denying him as a member of the band. However, after seeing Tarzan save the group, Kerchak declares Tarzan their new leader. After Kerchak's death, Tarzan looks across the saddened faces of the gorillas. He takes a couple of steps forward on his knuckles, similar to a gorilla. Then he puffs his chest out, lifts his head, and yells his famous call. This symbolizes his acceptance as the new leader of the family. When Tarzan turns and walks back into the jungle, the band follows him.

The Resurrection

Tarzan remains in the virtue ethical framework during this stage. After accepting the leadership position, Tarzan does not waver in his decision. The Resurrection occurs the next day as Jane and Porter are preparing their return to London. Tarzan walks Jane to their lifeboat on the beach where they exchange goodbyes. Even as Jane and Porter prepare for their trip back to England, Tarzan remains firm in staying behind. He can now be depended on to do the right thing for the family.

Case 10: Summary of Findings

Tarzan prominently shows signs of egoism and virtue ethics throughout his journey (see Figure 11). In this first two of the 12 stages, he prominently displays characteristics of a virtue ethical framework. Then, in the third stage, the Refusal of the Call, Tarzan briefly transitions to a prominent egoistic perspective before moving back to virtue ethics for the next two stages. Tarzan reverts back to prominent egoist during the Tests and Approach stages. Lastly, Tarzan realizes the error of his ways and prominently displays traits of a virtue ethical framework for the remaining five stages of the hero's journey.

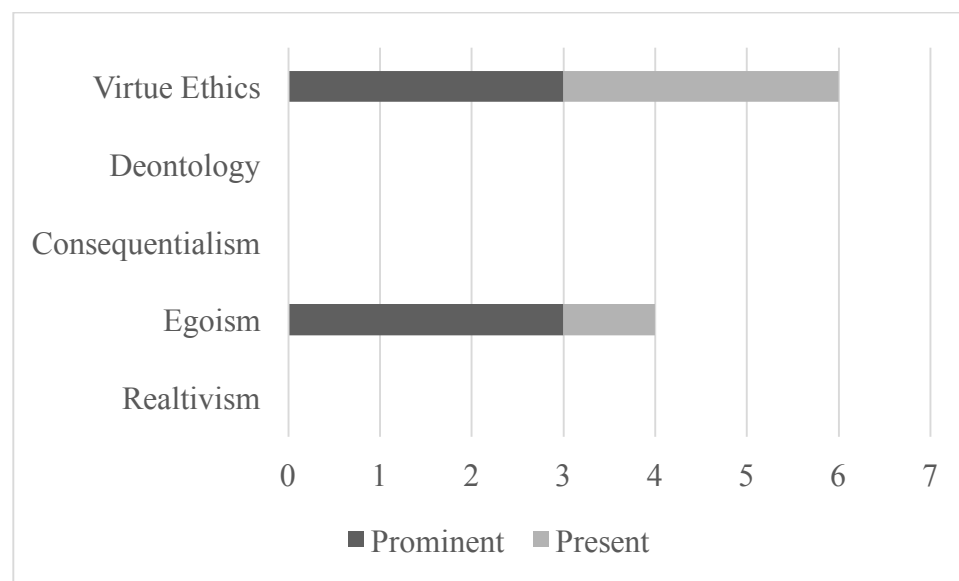


Figure 11. Tarzan's ethical frameworks. This figure illustrates the number of prominent and present ethical frameworks identified during Tarzan's hero's journey.

Emerging Themes

Three themes emerged during the analysis of the data in the form of character categorizations: virtuous heroes, anthropomorphic deontologists, and supporting roles of virtue. First, the virtuous heroes are the lead, male protagonists of their respective films. Though struggling in the beginning, each of them finished their journeys in the virtuous framework.

They all portray humanistic traits, such as walking upright, using speech to communicate, and the use of tools. In addition, they all have hair, strong jaw lines, and chiseled faces.

The anthropomorphic deontologists are heroes who are animals by classification, but speak and interact as humans. In some cases, they interact with humans, speaking in clear English. Within this theme, the characters end their films within a prominent deontological framework.

Lastly, the supporting roles of virtue are characters who are not the focus of the story, but are still essential in moving the plot forward. They do not follow the heroes' journey, but they maintain importance to the outcome of the film. In this study, they may serve as the deuteragonist or tritagonist of the story.

Virtuous Heroes

By definition, to be virtuous is to have or show virtue, and to display morally good decision making (Virtuous, n.d.). Beast, Aladdin, Quasimodo, Hercules, and Tarzan are the virtuous heroes of this study (see Table 5). Beast falls under the virtuous and not the anthropomorphic heroes due to his human origins; he is born human, but transformed into a beast by the enchantress.

Table 5

Virtuous Heroes

Lead Male Character
1. Beast
2. Aladdin
3. Quasimodo
4. Hercules
5. Tarzan

Though their journeys vary, by the end of their respective movies, Beast, Aladdin, Quasimodo, Hercules, and Tarzan transition into a prominent virtue ethics perspective. Beast learns to find the beauty within people, instead of focusing on outward appearance; inner beauty is more powerful than outer beauty. Aladdin learns that being truthful gets you better results than lying. The lesson to be learned from Quasimodo is to never judge a person from their outward appearance. Due to his facial deformity, Frollo forces Quasi to live in the cathedral bell tower. However, Quasimodo learns to follow his gentle, kind heart and overcome his outward appearance. Hercules has to learn what it means to be a true hero. Fame and fortune does not make a true hero, but heroism comes from the heart. Lastly, Tarzan learns that family is the most important aspect of life. Moreover, family does not have to be blood born. It can cross races and, in the case of this movie, species.

To become virtuous, all five heroes exhibited the following traits: (1) acts show right being over right action; (2) acts show concern for oneself and others; (3) heroes do the right thing because it's the right thing to do; (4) heroes can be depended upon to do the right thing. They learned how to act accordingly out of spontaneous goodness and focus on doing good versus being good.

Anthropomorphic Deontologists

Bernard, a mouse from *The Rescuers Down Under* and Simba, a lion from *The Lion King* are the two anthropomorphic deontologists of this study (see Table 6). Though they share the protagonist title with the virtuous heroes, these characters did not end their movies in a frame of virtue. Instead, these lead animals ended their films as prominent deontologists.

Table 6

Anthropomorphic Deontologists

Lead Male Character
1. Bernard
2. Simba

These two anthropomorphic deontologists never fully transitioned into virtuous heroes. Though virtue ethics were present during some stages, Bernard and Simba predominantly portrayed other ethical frameworks. Unlike their human counter parts, the animals were predominantly duty-focused. In Bernard's case, he was duty-focused until he completed the mission; he then reverted back to egoism.

To be predominantly deontological, the characters share the following traits: (1) showing duty focus over consequence; (2) doing what is right for its own sake; (3) moral rightness is dependent on their set of values; (4) moral law supersedes cultural law. Both of the anthropomorphic deontologist display these characteristics.

Supporting Roles of Virtue

The three supporting roles of virtue in this study are Prince Eric from *The Little Mermaid*, John Smith from *Pocahontas*, and Captain Li Shang from *Mulan* (see Table 7). These male characters did not serve as the protagonists, though their roles in their respective films is crucial to the plot. Additionally, these heroes are not present during every stage of the protagonist's journey. Prince Eric appears in ten of Ariel's 12 stages, John Smith appeared in eight of Pocahontas', and Li Shang only appeared in five of Mulan's 12 stages.

Table 7

Supporting Roles of Virtue

Lead Male Character
1. Prince Eric
2. John Smith
3. Captain Li Shang

Prince Eric and John Smith enter the story during the Ordinary World and remain in the virtue ethical framework through the entirety of the film. John Smith's first appearance in *Pocahontas* also occurs during the Ordinary World and remains a virtuous hero throughout the entirety of the film, meeting Pocahontas, helping her tribe and his crew break racial barriers, and saving Thomas from an execution. Captain Li Shang does not appear in *Mulan* until the Crossing of the First Threshold where he is appointed captain of a rag tag group of soldiers in training. Shang begins as a deontologist, choosing duty focused actions over consequences, but transitions into a member of the virtue ethics perspective during the tests, allies, and enemies stage. He continues to show virtuous characteristics throughout the remainder of the film.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed overview of findings from the data collection. It provided each case with a plot summary that guided the ethical analysis of each film as it followed the male character's story arc. At the end of each case, a summary of the data analysis identified key findings and themes. Lastly, the chapter finishes with a discussion on the major themes the data uncovered. The next chapter provides interpretation of this data, final conclusions, and limitations of the study, as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine Disney animation films produced from 1989-1999 to uncover ethical motivations of lead male characters for the reason that these portrayals provide modeling examples for young boys. This dissertation applied a qualitative research methodology to provide a deeper understanding of ethical frameworks portrayed in Disney animation films produced during the company's Renaissance Era.

Children build their moral codes in many ways, including the observation of models such as family members, community members, and fictional characters. These models become teachers as children develop their senses of right and wrong. Noting that media texts can serve as one source of such modeling, as well as Disney's didactic effect on children, this study questions the manner in which films produced during Disney's Renaissance Era model ethical behavior to young audiences. Examination of these portrayals occurred to uncover and understand the ethical modeling Disney conveys to young boys as they develop their own morals.

This chapter will discuss how the findings in Chapter 4 potentially impact a child's moral development. To further uncover how these portrayals may affect the construct of a child's code of ethics, this section discusses the findings from Chapter 4 and expands on how children develop their moral codes. Lastly, this chapter closes with a discussion of limitations and suggestions for future research.

Discussion

This study uncovered three categorical themes in Disney animation films produced during the corporation's renaissance era: virtuous heroes, anthropomorphic deontologists, and

supporting roles of virtue (see Table 8). These thematic categories provide three types of ethical modeling via social learning to young male viewers. The virtuous protagonists, all humans, begin their films lacking virtue, but throughout their journey transformed into a morally strong character. The anthropomorphic deontologists, all animals, remain or become duty focused as their story unfolds, focusing on their moral obligation to complete a task. Lastly, the supporting roles of virtue served as the lead male characters of the film, but not the main protagonists of the story. In sum, if the character is human and the protagonist, they fell into the virtuous hero category. If the lead male protagonist was an anthropomorphic animal, they finished their films as deontologists. Lastly, if the lead male characters were human and not the protagonist, they remained virtuous throughout the entire film, the lone exception being Li Shang in *Pocahontas*. He spent one stage of the journey as a deontologist.

Table 8

Prominent Ethical Frameworks for Each Character Type

		Stages of the Journey											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Character Type	Ethical Framework	Ordinary World	Call to Adventure	Refusal of the Call	Meeting with the Mentor	Crossing the First Threshold	Tests, Allies, Enemies	Approach to the Inmost Cave	The Ordeal	Reward	The Road Back	The Resurrection	Return with the Elixir
Virtuous Heroes	Relativism	1											
	Egoism	1	4	4	3	4	3	2	1	1			
	Consequentialism												
	Deontology												
	Virtue Ethics	2	1		1	1	2	2	4	4	5	5	5
Anthropomorphic Deontologists	Relativism												
	Egoism	2	2	2	1	2	2				1	1	1
	Consequentialism												
	Deontology							1	2	2	1	1	1
	Virtue Ethics							1					
Supporting Roles of Virtue	Relativism												
	Egoism												
	Consequentialism												
	Deontology					1							
	Virtue Ethics	2				2	3	2	3	2	2	2	2
Grand Total	Relativism	1											
	Egoism	37											
	Consequentialism												
	Deontology	9											
	Virtue Ethics	53											

The five virtuous heroes serve as the lead male protagonists of their respective films. Each character began their story in separate ethical frameworks, but each ultimately transitioned into egoists during the middle stages of their journey. They each went through a series of trials that led them down an unsuccessful path, becoming hated, cast out, or self-involved until the climax of the story. Beast is selfish and arrogant, Aladdin believes what he does is right because it betters his own current position, Quasimodo struggles with self-image and concerns himself with his own needs, Hercules seeks fame, and Tarzan worries about his past over the safety of his family. However, all of these characters experience an awakening of sorts that teaches them the error of their ways. When they began walking the virtuous path and doing deeds for the greater

good, their luck began to change. Beast won Belle's love, Aladdin married Princess Jasmine, Quasimodo felt accepted by the town, Hercules selflessly saved Meg, and Tarzan learned to protect his family. These characters may potentially teach children that selflessness goes further than selfishness, which is emphasized by these characters' ethical transitions. Each of them tried to better their current positions, but ended up hurting themselves or others in the process. When they chose right being over right action, they became the heroes needed to save the day. These characters' narratives emphasize the benefits of virtuous ethics while contrasting the costs of more ego-oriented frameworks. As an example of media modeling then, children stand to learn from the mistakes of these characters while also having a blueprint for more virtuous ethical behavior.

The anthropomorphic deontologists follow a similar story arc, but instead of finishing virtuously, they end their films as deontologists. These heroes ignore consequence and character traits. Instead, they choose the right action over the good action. Unlike their human counterparts, the anthropomorphic deontologists followed duty-based ethics rather than focusing on the greater good. These characters also serve as the lead male protagonists of their films. However, they never showed signs of virtue ethics. In each case, duty-based ethics were specific to the society with which the characters associate. As a member of the Rescue Aid Society, Bernard knew he had to accept the mission, even though he did not personally want to fly to Australia. A virtuous hero would not hesitate; they would immediately accept the mission because it is the right thing to do. Bernard did show signs of virtue ethics, but never fully made the transition; it only lasted one stage. Similarly, Simba was afraid to face his pride, but he knew it was his duty as prince to restore peace among the pack. Simba's royal heritage may have influenced his egoistic tendencies, however, later he transforms egoism into deontology.

Importantly, children are more likely to imitate those with whom they share identity characteristics, such as gender, age, or cultural ethnicity (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, child audiences may be less likely to imitate the actions of the anthropomorphic characters due to their animalistic characteristics; this perhaps speaks to the limited dimensionality of Bernard and Simba.

Lastly, the supporting roles of virtue began and finished their journeys in the virtuous framework, never slipping into egoism. Other than Shang's stage of deontology, Prince Eric, John Smith, and Captain Li Shang showed virtuous characteristics throughout their entire movies. A child may pick up the ethical frameworks from watching these characters. However, they will not experience the overcoming of struggle that the virtuous heroes experience. Without seeing the struggle, a child may still experiment with other ethical frameworks to discover the difference between right and wrong. Since they do not view a character traveling up and down a story arc, they may experience their own real life journey of ups and downs. In addition, it is more likely that a child will imitate a model of the same gender (Perry & Bussey, 1979). Therefore, if boys happen to watch these films containing a female lead protagonist, it still gives them a morally strong male character to identify with during observation.

Disney movies positively encourage a strong moral code in their male characters. In eight of the ten movies, the male role models finish in a virtue ethics perspective. Aristotle claimed that virtue ethics are the ideal character traits to display. A virtuous person is someone who is always kind and generous. They show concern for oneself and others and always seek to do the right thing. Though the remaining two characters are not completely virtuous, deontological traits still show concern for others. Deontology is not a selfish moral code; instead, it follows duty-focus over consequence.

Bandura (1962, 1977) describes social learning theory as humans learning from one another via observation, imitation, and modeling. Behaviors learned through observation become a major part of a person's behavioral experience (Bandura, 2004). During the observation, humans acquire the behavioral traits through symbolic representations of appropriate performance. Moreover, models presented through mediated formats such as television and film are more effective in gripping the attention of viewers (Bandura, Grusec, & Menlove, 1966). Therefore, children may develop their moral codes based off of media portrayals such as these Disney characters' and their ethically-guided decision-making.

Based on the three themes of character models found in this dissertation research, the potential impact of ethical portrayals in Disney movies becomes apparent. If a child views a Disney movie with a lead male protagonist, they may develop a moral code similar to the virtuous heroes. They observe the character's battle as the story progresses until the story arc ultimately teaches them the value of virtue ethics. A child may learn from the mistakes made by the protagonists and acquire the same virtuous behavioral traits. If they watch a film containing an anthropomorphic deontologist, they may learn characters of a deontological perspective, shape their ethical code around their sense of duty to self and others. Lastly, if male children watch a Disney film where the leading male character is not the protagonist, they will mostly observe decisions made from a virtuous perspective. This may be limiting because characters in this category show no other ethical frameworks, their portrayals lack a clear progression between favorable and unfavorable frameworks. This depiction of ethical development as a process is in fact a strength of films in the virtuous heroes category.

Another thing to keep in mind is the age of a child and the film they watch. Screened media influence the progression of moral development in children. However, understanding the

difference between right and wrong depends on a child's age, environment, and maturity (Mares & Woodard, 2012; Narvaez, Gleason, Mitchell, & Bentley, 1999). What seems like an obvious moral lesson to an adult may not be as clear to a child. To understand how these films may affect children, one must understand moral development.

Moral development begins during infancy and evolves throughout a person's life cycle. A child's upbringing has the potential to alter their morality and/or values. As a person progresses through life, they begin to learn the values of their culture, and adapt them to their own thoughts, ideas, and explanations of morality. Every human being constructs and defines their own values from a variety of social and cultural sources; however, the rate of each person's moral development process differs.

In addition, children will observe many ethical models throughout the course of their lives. Due to the growing popularity of mobile devices and wireless Internet connectivity, mediated content is becoming a part of every child's growth process. The television transformed the media landscape of social development during the end of the 20th century. Since then, and even into the beginning of 21st century, children spent hours a day in front of the TV. It's powerful imagery, representations, and symbolic models provided by popular characters shape what children think about the world and how they see themselves living in society (Huntman & Morgan, 2012). Today, viewing habits are changing due to video streaming providers, such as Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime. This makes the process of identity development much more complex. Therefore, it becomes important to understand the impact this new media landscape has on moral development.

With today's advancements and new technology associated with the viewing of screened media, such as video on demand and Internet streaming, children and adults have unprecedented

access to visual media content. With this increased access to symbolic modeling, children also have a substantially increased amount of sources for social learning. This influx of mediated information competes with traditional role models for children's, such as parents and teachers (Bandura, 1977).

As noted in Chapter 2, cultivation theory states that repeated exposure to certain media messages can lead to increased susceptibility of those messages. For example, a viewer that watches more violent programs may believe that the world is a more dangerous place than it actually is. Cultivation theory serves as just another reason for the importance of the current study. If increased time spent watching screened media constructs children's perceptions of the real world, then it becomes important to provide them with films that demonstrate positive morality.

According to the results of this study, Disney provides children with good natured programming. The male characters observed during Disney's renaissance era do serve as a source of positive ethical modeling to boys. With the youth of society learning about themselves via mediated content, Disney is a strong choice to teach and encourage positive ethical and moral development. As Giroux (2004) argues, media and broadcast technologies have created a new educational environment. Like the heroes of these films, children will learn and grow alongside their own journey. This allows Disney to become a positive "teaching machine" used to shape a child's perception of reality. With the influx of mobile devices and wireless Internet, mediated content such as Disney films continue to become a large part of childhood development processes.

Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of this study is that it focuses on the films as texts and does not directly study audiences. Looking at these films as media texts serves as a baseline of future research, however human subject research is required to uncover the impact Disney films have on a child's moral development.

Another one of the primary limitations of this study involves case participation. This convenience sample cannot be used to make a generalized statement about Disney films or the Disney Corporation. These ten films serve as a small sample in comparison to the amount of animation films available for observation within the Disney universe. Furthermore, the researcher selected them due to their convenient accessibility. Disney released all ten movies in DVD format and produced them within a definitive period – The Disney Renaissance Era.

Another limitation of the study is the researcher serving as the only collector of data. As stated in Chapter 1, a person's background, experiences, or education may shape their interpretation of a given case. Therefore, the study assumes some bias in the data analysis stages.

Future Research

Future research should include studies to determine if and to what extent Disney films convey ethical models for children. Further human subject research will further solidify the didactic effect such films have on moral development.

Several themes emerged during this research that also lend themselves to future research on Disney films. One area would be to complete a study of all Disney animation films to see if they follow the virtuous hero, anthropomorphic deontologist, and supporting role of virtue themes. Such research could follow each era of the Disney animation timeline: The Golden Era

(1937 – 1942), The Wartime Era (1943 – 1949), The Silver Age (1949 – 1959), The Bronze Age (1960 – 1988), The Renaissance Era (1989 – 1999), The Post-Renaissance Era (2000 – 2009), and The Revival Era (2010 – present).

Another area is to compare male versus female protagonists and the moral codes exhibited during their journeys. The human males followed a progression from egoism to virtue, and it would be interesting to see if the female heroines would follow suit. This may be a recurring theme for all Disney characters that is not necessarily gender specific.

Another area for future research is to conduct the study using the same methodology on other films and TV shows, particularly with characters from other production companies outside of Disney Animation Studios. Research of this sort would help to determine whether heroes from other production companies emphasize the same egoistic to virtuous pattern.

Lastly, other studies could compare the hero's journey of traditional heroes and anti-heroes. Anti-heroes by definition are characters in a story who lack traditional heroic qualities. Due to this lack, it would be interesting to see if anti-heroes are also guided by ethical frameworks in their decision making, and how this narrative arc differs from that of more traditionally heroic characters.

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Appendix A

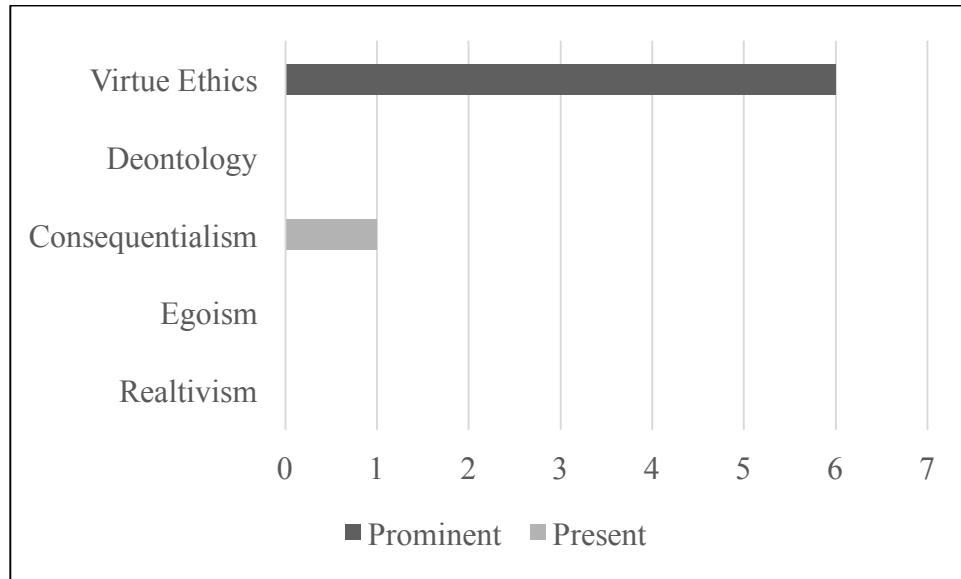
Coding Frame

	Ordinary World	Call to Adventure	Refusal of the Call	Meeting with the Mentor	Crossing the First Threshold	Tests, Allies, Enemies	Approach to the Inmost Cave	The Ordeal	Reward	The Road Back	The Resurrection	Return with the Elixir	Total Present
Relativism													
Prominent													0
Present													0
Not Present													0
Egoism													
Prominent													0
Present													0
Not Present													0
Consequentialism													
Prominent													0
Present													0
Not Present													0
Deontology													
Prominent													0
Present													0
Not Present													0
Virtue Ethics													
Prominent													0
Present													0
Not Present													0

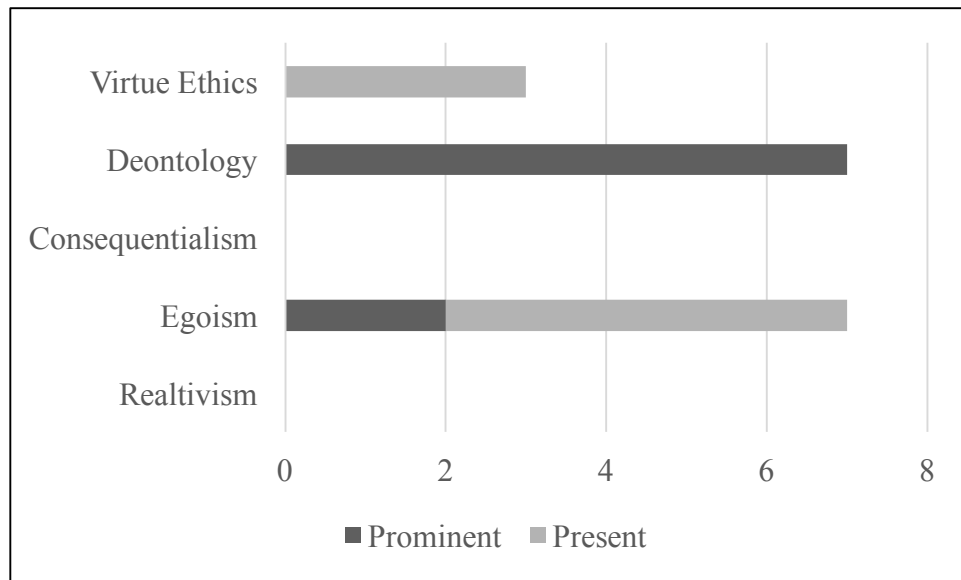
Appendix B

Characters' Ethical Frameworks

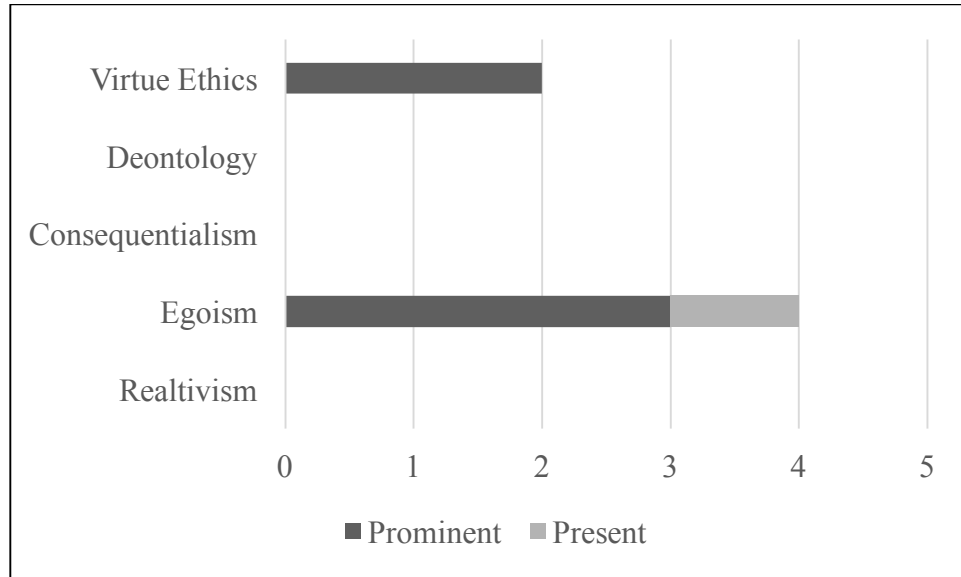
Prince Eric's Ethical Frameworks



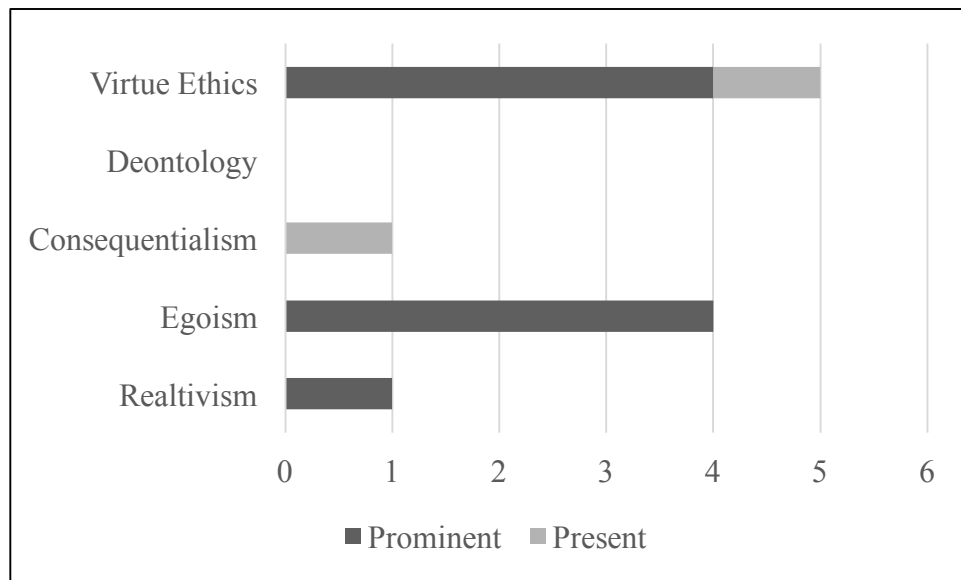
Bernard's Ethical Frameworks



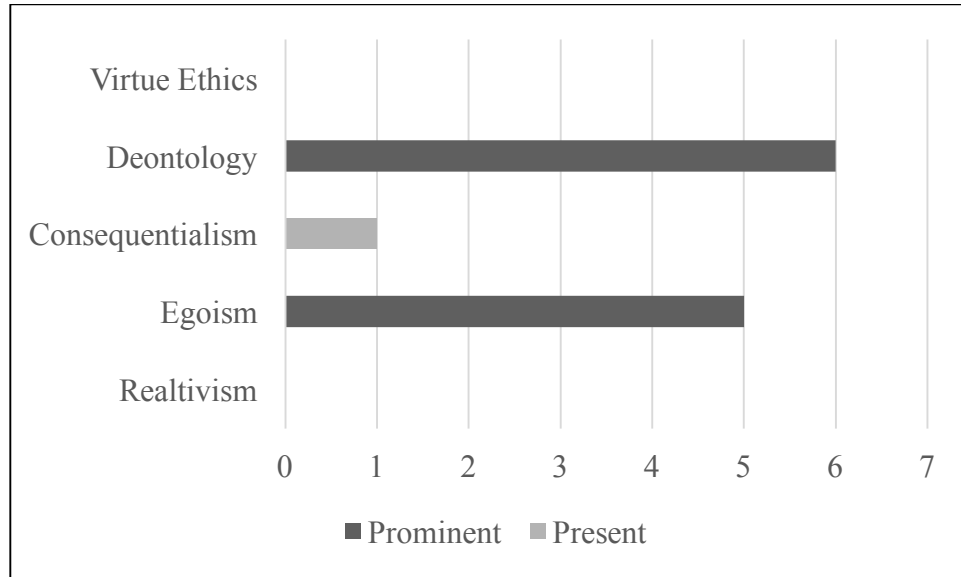
Beast's Ethical Frameworks



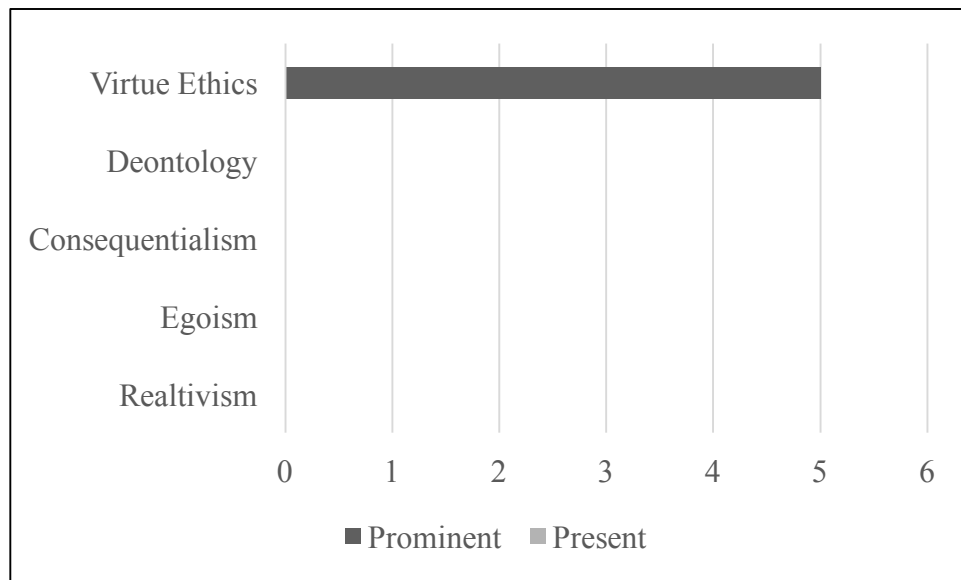
Aladdin's Ethical Frameworks



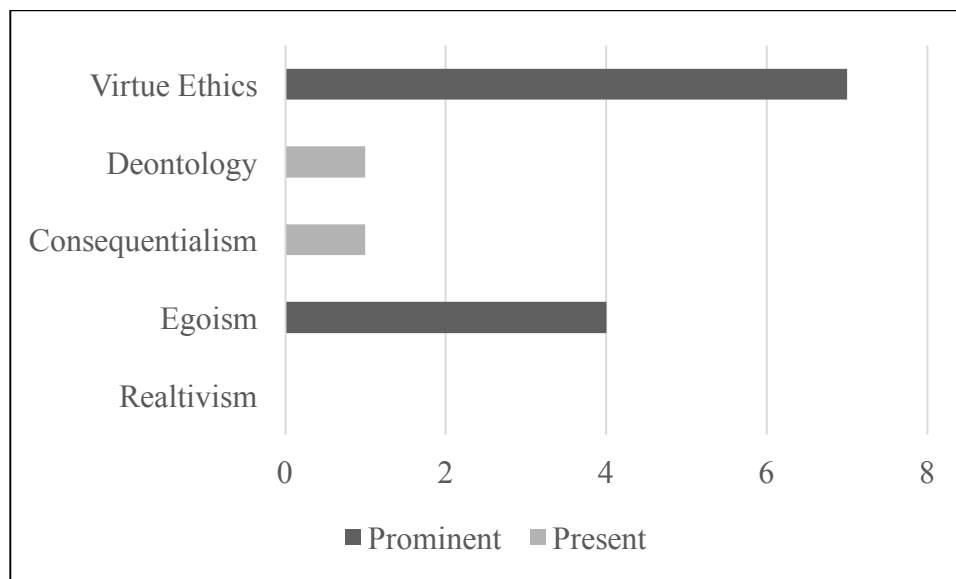
Simba's Ethical Frameworks



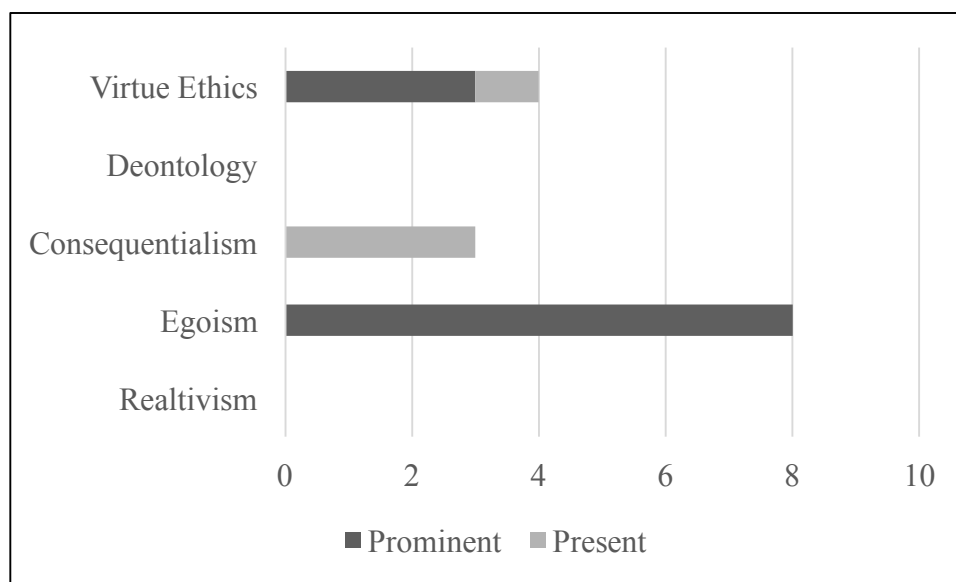
John Smith's Ethical Frameworks



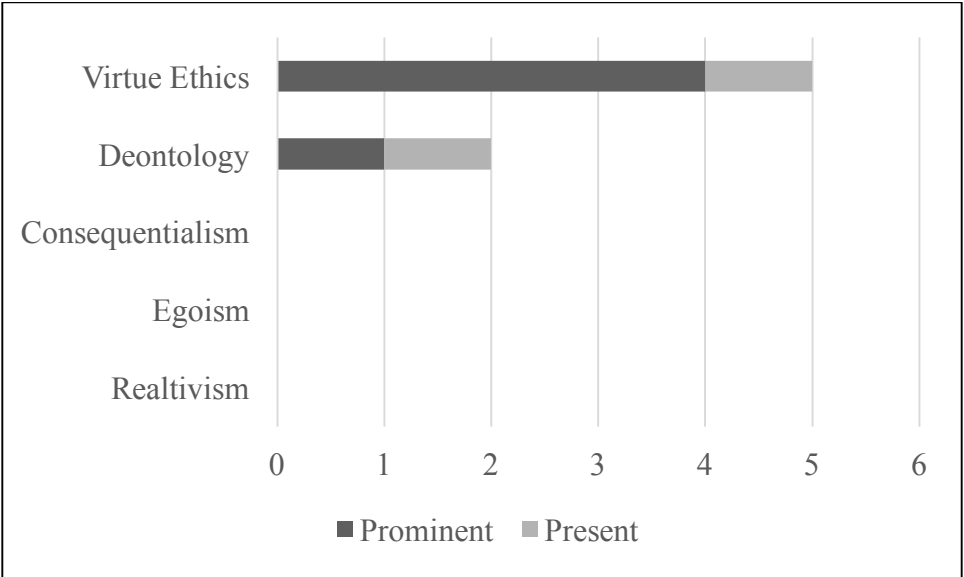
Quasimodo's Ethical Frameworks



Hercules' Ethical Frameworks



Li Shang's Ethical Frameworks



Tarzan's Ethical Frameworks

