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Elsa and Anna - The Two Sides of the Coin of Woman Empowerment



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**Gokulshankar Sabesan¹, Kavitha Gokulshankar²,
Remya Vallathol¹, Ruksana Raihan¹ and Ranjith
MS³**

*1 Faculty of Medicine, AIMST University, Sungai
Petani, Malaysia*

2. Free lance writer, Sungai Petani, Malaysia

*3. Faculty of Medicine, Quest International University
Perak, Ipoh, Malaysia.*

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyses the two female lead roles- Elsa and Anna of the 2013 Disney's blockbuster movie, Frozen. Without any prejudice, the authors analyze the merits and demerits of both the animated characters that are regarded as a symbol of women's liberation, freedom, and empowerment.



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INTRODUCTION

The Disney's 2013 animation movie revolves around two main characters Elsa and Anna. This movie characters are designed to give a new insight into the thought process of the iPad generation of how modern day women should be?

Unlike the earlier films of Disney, this movie portrays the female characters in lead roles. This movie is different in every aspect as it tries to imply that a True Love's Kiss to break a spell need not come from a male character but it actually can be a person who cares (a sibling in this case). The movie actually gives a young girl the choice of being Elsa or Anna in real life. This paper tries to appreciate the intricacies, merits, and demerits of both of these adorable characters of Disney.

Being Elsa

The character of a totally misunderstood girl is portrayed very effectively. Initially, Elsa lives with the fear of what people think of her and she hides her immaculate powers of making ice and snow. It is normal to see girls of middle economic class in conservative societies to suppress their talents or skills just to seem normal and be recognized acceptable and docile by a male dominant society. In the movie, Elsa is asked by her parents to conceal her powers. In the process, she shuts herself out from the society including her little sister whom she loves most. But as the story proceeds it becomes realistically impossible for a talented person like Elsa to keep all her emotions suppressed and hidden. So when it erupts, she goes to the extent of saying 'I don't care for what others going to say'. When she lets it go (her fear and reticence), she transforms into a new modern woman who is no longer bothered about the cold society (she in turn wants to be cold to the world which was suppressing her happiness so long and live her life of her dreams). Elsa is special as she is savvy, strong but most importantly she is single she does not need a man to save her. A new perception among the feminists of this century which actually questions the necessity on whether they need a living relationship with a man in the so-called institution of 'life long bonding' called marriage. Elsa is ready to forgo the title of 'good girl' as it interferes with her freedom of expression and thought. Elsa is powerful as she can create a fortress of her own, but her transformation of her whole appearance in the process of her self-

realization of her hidden powers is scary. Elsa has a ‘manly’ attitude which is even depicted in her dress color (blue), often the favorite color of the boys.

But a sudden change from her traditional attire to slit-to-the-thigh dress with a transparent snowflake-patterned train and a pair of silver-white high heels makes her a totally different personality and is viewed as overly sexual by critics (1). This metamorphosis of Elsa and her ‘break the rules’ outlook is worrisome to parents who do not want their daughters to be influenced by the ‘let it go’ attitude.

Living in a room with that kind of power and scared of hurting others, not knowing what to do might have driven her crazy. Once her power gets unleashed in front of others, she flees. She stops thinking about her sister and about the kingdom. The only thing she wants was to be her real self and enjoy the immense freedom which she never had. Though, there is vast criticism and outcry from conservatives and traditionalists, the charm of Elsa is so profound and overwhelming on the young girls (who wants to care about other’s opinion when you really, ‘let it go’). Elsa is capable of unleashing her magical powers when agitated. Elsa is not emotionally stable and is totally out of control at times when she creates the snow monster or when she assaults her sister, Anna while in uncontrollable anger and desperation to be ‘alone’. The lesson for the extremely talented and creative young girls of today is that they need to properly channelize their skills for the betterment of their career and personality development and gel with the society rather than getting labeled as weird and unusual. It is also important to understand that Elsa’s parents are also partly responsible for her nature as they advised her to hide her supernatural powers instead of advising her to properly channelize it in a productive way. Despite all the flaws, Elsa represents the boundless female spirit- strong and graceful, with the power to change the world (2).

Virtues of Elsa: Introvert, supernatural, ‘woman-power’, talented, temperamental, feministic, empowered, creative.

Being Anna

Anna is more a familiar girl to the society with a ‘girl next door’ look. She is willing to fall in love at first sight like most of our teenagers. But what is extraordinary about her is her ability to

recover from the deceit of her boyfriend, Prince Hans and punches him on his face when she realizes that he is no fit. Her role also conveys the message that what a young girl needs in life is not a Prince Charming but an understanding and caring companion like Kristoff to be with her at her times of need. She is also open, willing to understand and help her sister to get over her fears and solitude.

Her character is more 'near reality' which is best described in the scene where she wakes up in the beginning with saliva drooling over the face. It is unlike the earlier Disney characters who shall be ever beautiful be it in sleep or otherwise. She is a normal girl but with an enchanting spirit and optimism. Anna is daring with enduring perseverance to accomplish her job. She sets off on her own to bring back the summer to the kingdom of Arendelle which is set in an eternal winter by her sister. Her dress is more traditional and is a mix of blue and magenta (more feminine) and her faith in people gave more acclaim to Anna than Elsa among critics. Her scarf reminds most of the viewers, about the resemblance of the dress code of little red riding hood. Anna's character is built on both love and sacrifice, but interestingly her love for her family (sister) predominates over her romantic inclination to her boyfriend. Anna is full of fun and enthusiasm and she wants to share it with the people around. She says in the movie, 'nobody wants to be alone' reinstating the need for a family for everyone to be happy.

Both the characters of Anna and Elsa were nominated for Best Animated Female by the Alliance of Women Film Journalists, but sadly it was only Anna who won the award (3).

Virtues of Anna: Extrovert, enthusiastic, fun loving, adventurous, caring and romantic, naive, living in a dream world, believes in magic, love, and family.

CONCLUSION

Even after the lapse of two years from the release of the movie in 2013, the popularity and influence of the two lead characters among young girls are so phenomenal. Dresses, school bags, handbags, watches, gifts, toys and party themes still revolve among these lovely sisters. Anna and Elsa are more like two sides of a coin; none is superior or inferior to each other. It is always a choice for the girls to choose the situation on when to be Anna or when to be Elsa. Be it bound with the familial ties and yet fight for the cause like graceful Anna or let it go, shut the doors to

other's criticisms and be an enchanting queen of the charming ice castle like Elsa. Our votes are for both Anna and Elsa!

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