



Internal Conflict of the Main Character in Frozen (2013)

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the internal conflict experienced by the main character Elsa in the film Frozen (2013). The theory use to analyze the conflict from Kanney (1966), specifically the category of Man vs. Self. The method used to collect the data is a qualitative approach with a document analysis study design. Data were obtained from dialogues, scenes, and song lyrics in the film that reflect Elsa's inner turmoil. The analysis results show that Elsa experiences conflict between fear and the desire to be free, between self-identity and social expectations, as well as between guilt and the need for emotional closeness. These conflicts play a crucial role in Elsa's character development and convey a universal message about self-acceptance and the courage to face fear.

Keywords: Internal Conflict, Man Vs. Self, Frozen (2013), Kanney, Character Psychology.

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INTRODUCTION

Animated films not only serve as entertainment but also as a medium that can convey psychological and social values through complex characters. One film that is interesting to study from a psychological perspective is Frozen (2013), produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios. This film presents the main character Elsa, who experiences intense internal conflict related to her identity, power, and social relationships.

Conflict is a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has had a negative impact on it, something that becomes a condition that serves as the starting point of a conflict. This definition encompasses various conflicts experienced by people within organizations, misalignment of goals, differences in the interpretation of facts, disagreements caused by behavioral expectations, and so on. Additionally, other definitions are flexible enough to encompass various levels of conflict from actual actions and violence to subtle forms of disagreement. (Wahyudi, 2015, p. 1).

The animated film Frozen (2013) produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios features the main character Elsa, a princess of the Arendelle kingdom who possesses magical powers in the form of ice control. Instead of being a source of happiness, this ability becomes a source of inner suffering for Elsa. She is educated from a young age to hide her powers as they are deemed dangerous, even to her own sibling. This situation causes Elsa to grow up in fear, isolation, and denial of herself. When her powers can no longer be controlled, her internal conflict reaches a peak and drives the occurrence of significant events in the film's storyline.

Elsa's internal conflict is interesting to analyze because it reflects a complex psychological condition, ranging from fear, guilt, to the desire for emotional independence. Based on Kane's (1966) conflict theory, internal conflict or man vs. self is one of the main forms of conflict in fictional narratives that significantly determines character development. Kanney states that this type of conflict reveals the inner struggle that a character experiences

due to the clash between desires, values, or psychological pressures ("a character may struggle with internal doubt, fear, or a moral decision, causing emotional tension that drives the story forward").

This internal conflict not only serves as a major driving force for the development of Elsa's character, but also acts as a reflection of broader themes about identity, acceptance, and love. In a society that often demands perfection, Elsa's journey to accept who she is and to overcome her fears becomes highly relevant. Through an in-depth analysis of this internal conflict, this article aims to explore how "Frozen" successfully conveys a powerful message about courage, self-acceptance, and the importance of self-love, and its impact on audiences around the world.

The reason I chose "Frozen" as the focus of this article is because the movie presents a theme that is very relevant to the human experience, namely internal conflict. The main character, Elsa, faces a complex struggle between social expectations and self-identity, which reflects the challenges that many people face in everyday life. Using Kanney's (1966) conflict theory, this article delves deeper into how the battle between desires and fears shapes the character and influences the storyline. In addition, the universal message of self-acceptance and courage conveyed in this movie is very important, especially in a world that often demands perfection. Through in-depth analysis, this article hopes to provide meaningful insights into the importance of loving oneself and facing fears, as well as inspire readers to reflect on their own journeys in facing internal conflicts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

First article in his article, David A. Lake (2003) with titled "*International Relations Theory and Internal Conflict: Insights from the Interstices*" explores how international relations theory can be used to understand internal conflicts, including civil wars and domestic violence. His main objective is to demonstrate that theories such as the bargaining theory of war are not only relevant in the context of interstate relations but can also be effectively applied to intrastate conflicts. The author uses a literature-based conceptual approach to review the dynamics of negotiation failures involving asymmetric information, issues of non-credible commitment, and indivisible issues. Based on this theory, conflicts—both international and domestic—occur when two parties fail to reach a peaceful agreement despite the rational understanding that war is detrimental to both sides. The main findings of this article suggest that the difference between international anarchy and domestic hierarchy is not absolute. Instead, both are vulnerable to the same institutional failures. Lake also highlights the role of extremist actors who exploit violence to expand their political support base, and suggests that researchers view internal and external conflicts as part of the same spectrum of political violence. This article makes an important contribution in bridging the studies of international relations and domestic politics through the theory of conflict negotiation that is general and cross-border.

Second article, "A Psychological Approach to Internal Conflict in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter Series" by Aveen Sarkawt A. Sami (2023): The research conducted by Aveen Sarkawt A. Sami aims to identify and analyze the forms of internal conflict experienced by the main characters in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. This study uses a psychological approach, referring to Kurt Lewin's theory which divides internal conflicts into four types: approach-approach, avoidance-avoidance, approach-avoidance, and double approach-avoidance conflict. The method used is qualitative-descriptive, analyzing data from narratives, dialogues, and

actions of characters such as Harry Potter, Dumbledore, Snape, Hermione, Ron, Draco, and Voldemort. The results of the research show that internal conflicts in the novels not only enrich character development but also reinforce key themes such as sacrifice, loyalty, courage, and moral dilemmas. The author finds that avoidance-avoidance and double approach-avoidance conflicts are the most intense and frequently occurring forms, especially in difficult decisions involving life, death, and self-esteem. Through this analysis, the researcher asserts that psychological conflicts play a crucial role in depicting character growth and in deepening narratives, while also reflecting the psychological realities of humans in a fantasy world.

Third article, 'The Internal Conflict of the Main Character in the Novel 'It Ends With Us' by Colleen Hoover' by Azzahra Muthia Hamida, Erik Candra Pertala, and Siska Hestiana: The research conducted by Hamida, Pertala, and Hestiana (2024) aims to analyze the internal conflict experienced by the main character, Lily, in Colleen Hoover's novel *It Ends With Us*. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with a literary approach, particularly through Stanton's theory, which distinguishes conflict into two main forms: physical conflict and inner conflict. The primary data source is the novel itself, with direct quotes in the form of sentences, dialogues, and narratives depicting the main character's emotional struggles. The findings of this study indicate that Lily faces various forms of inner conflict related to her past, family trauma, interpersonal relationships, and the search for identity. One of the most dominant forms of conflict is Lily's difficulty in expressing her emotions directly, which is why she often channels her feelings through writing in a journal since the age of 15. This research strengthens the notion that internal conflict in literary works not only serves as a plot element but also reflects the complex and human psychological dynamics of the character.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In narrative analysis, conflict is an important element that shapes the dynamics of the story and character development. The classical theory of conflict in fiction put forth by Kanney (1966) explains that conflict can be categorized into various forms, one of which is internal conflict or Man vs. Self. In his essay *A Note on Conflict*, Kanney writes that: "The conflicts with which fiction concerns itself are of many kinds. A story may deal with a conflict within a single man (e.g., desire vs. duty)" (Kanney, 1966) Internal conflict occurs when the main character experiences a clash between two sides within themselves, such as between desire and duty, between fear and courage, or between personal identity and social demands. In this form, the conflict is not external or physical, but rather psychological and emotional.

This conflict continues within Elsa throughout the film. For example, when she has to choose between hiding her powers or being true to herself, between protecting others by distancing herself, or accepting support from those who love her. These forms of conflict are at the core of Elsa's emotional journey. Referring to Kanney's theory, this study uses the Man vs. Self category as a lens to analyze how Elsa's inner conflict develops and affects her character transformation in the film.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a document analysis study design as explained by John W. Creswell (2014), who states that in qualitative research, researchers strive to understand the meanings constructed by individuals regarding a social phenomenon or life issue. In this context, the film *Frozen* (2013) is analyzed as a narrative text to understand the internal conflict experienced by the main character, Elsa.

The main data source in this research is the animated film *Frozen* (2013) produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios. The data analyzed includes the dialogues of the main character (Elsa), narration, and song lyrics that depict internal conflicts. Additional sources include the film's transcripts and scene excerpts.

Collecting Data collection was conducted using the documentation method, which involves: Watching the movie *Frozen* (2013) repeatedly to identify parts relevant to Elsa's internal conflict. Taking notes and quoting dialogues, song lyrics, and visual descriptions that contain expressions of inner conflict.

The data is analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach. The steps of analysis include: Identifying forms of conflict based on conflict categories according to Kane (1966), specifically man vs. self. Classifying scenes or dialogues that show internal conflict into several themes such as: fear, self-rejection, desire for freedom, and identity conflict. Interpreting the meaning of that internal conflict in relation to Elsa's character development throughout the story.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis

Data 1 (Conflict 1): Minute 27:17–30:00

In this scene, Anna pursues Elsa after Elsa's magical powers are accidentally revealed in public. In an emotional confrontation in the throne room, Anna tries to have a heart-to-heart talk, questioning Elsa's reasons for always staying away from her. Elsa, under emotional stress and fearful of her own powers, tries to stop the conversation with a firm and defensive tone. Tensions peak when Elsa loses control and demonstrates her ice magic, which shocks everyone and triggers her decision to flee the kingdom.

Dialog

Anna: "What did I ever do to you?"

Elsa: "Enough, Anna."

Anna: "No. Why do you shut me out? Why do you shut the world out? What are you so afraid of?"

Elsa: "I said enough!"

This scene takes place during the reception for Elsa's coronation as the Queen of Arendelle. Anna suddenly asks for permission to marry Prince Hans, whom she has just met. Elsa refuses, and the situation escalates when Anna questions why Elsa always keeps her distance and shuts herself off. The emotional pressure on Elsa reaches its peak until she screams and accidentally reveals her ice powers in public, freezing the palace hall floor and shocking all the royal guests. This scene marks the beginning of Elsa's powers being revealed and signifies the shift from control to crisis.

This dialogue reveals Elsa's deep inner conflict. She is trapped between two sides: one side wants to maintain her relationship with her sister (Anna), but on the other side, she is haunted by fear of herself and the consequences of her powers. When Anna asks, 'What are you so afraid of?', it touches the core of Elsa's conflict—not because she hates Anna, but because she fears the consequences of that closeness. The long-buried fear finally culminates in an emotional and physical explosion. This conflict does not involve direct physical or social confrontation but rather an emotional battle within Elsa herself, thus falling into the category of Man vs. Self. In his theory, Kenney (1966) explains that such conflicts are the struggle between two forces within an individual, such as between desire (the desire to be loved and

accepted) and duty or fear (the obligation to maintain distance for the safety of others). Elsa wants to have a normal relationship with her sister, but she believes that the only way to protect Anna is by keeping her distance. Kenney suggests that the conflict in the story can be understood like a match between two forces, for example, 'A vs. B.' In this case, Elsa's conflict can be seen as 'Fear vs. Love' or 'Control vs. Emotion.' Thus, *Frozen* illustrates how a character's internal conflict can become the main force in shaping the plot and characterization.

Data 2 (Conflict 2): Minute 55:27–40:00

In this scene, Anna tries to re-establish emotional closeness with Elsa, reminding her that their relationship used to be very close. Elsa is silent, burdened by traumatic memories of accidentally hurting Anna as a child. Elsa's feelings of guilt and fear are so intense that she rejects Anna's advances, saying that they can't go back to the way they used to be. When Anna tries to approach, Elsa insists that she stays away from Anna not because she doesn't care, but because she wants to protect her. This moment highlights Elsa's inner conflict between wanting to be close and the fear that limits her.

Dialog

Anna: "Elsa, we were so close. We can be like that again." (Elsa falls silent, recalling the moment she accidentally hurt Anna when they were little)

Elsa: "No, we can't. Goodbye, Anna."

Anna: "Elsa, wait!"

Elsa: "No! I'm just trying to protect you."

This scene occurs when Anna successfully finds Elsa in the ice palace she built in the mountains. Anna hopes to rebuild their once warm relationship. However, that request instead triggers Elsa's past trauma, reminding her of how she accidentally hurt Anna as a child because she couldn't control her powers. Elsa, who feels that her powers are still dangerous, refuses Anna's invitation and chooses to isolate herself again under the guise of 'protecting' her sister. This conflict clearly illustrates the emotional turmoil within Elsa. She does not reject Anna out of hatred, but rather because of guilt and fear that she has not healed since childhood. Elsa feels that closeness will only bring danger, not happiness. On one hand, she longs for the warmth of sisterly love, but on the other hand, she believes that distancing herself is the only way to keep others safe.

This conflict is aptly categorized as Man vs. Self, in accordance with Kenney's theory (1966) which states that internal conflict is a battle between two emotional forces within the character. In this scene, Elsa experiences a clash between regret vs. hope, and affection vs. fear. She is not fighting against Anna, but rather battling her memories, trauma, and negative beliefs about herself. According to Kenney's approach, conflict can be likened to a match between two forces, for example, 'A vs. B.' In this context, Elsa's conflict can be seen as 'Memory of Pain vs. Desire for Reconnection.' Elsa cannot come to terms with her past, so she chooses the path she believes is safest, which is to distance herself. Unfortunately, this decision only deepens the emotional chasm between her and Anna, highlighting the impact of unresolved inner conflict.

Data 3 (Conflict 3): Minute 57:28–57:47

In this tension-filled scene, Anna again tries to calm Elsa down and reassure her that they can overcome everything together. However, Elsa, who is increasingly overwhelmed with fear, feels that Anna's presence is making the situation worse. Elsa warns that the environment around her is unsafe because her powers are difficult to control when her emotions are unstable.

Although Anna remains optimistic and tries to calm Elsa down, the mounting emotional pressure makes Elsa panic. In that state, she accidentally unleashes an ice attack that hits Anna. This incident reinforces Elsa's deepest fear—that her powers could hurt the people she cares about most.

Dialog

Elsa: “Anna, please. You only make it worse.”

Anna: “Don’t panic.”

Elsa: “There is so much fear. You are not safe here.”

Anna: “We can fix this together.”

Elsa: “No.”

Anna: “Everything will be alright.”

Elsa: “No, I couldn’t.” (*Elsa then accidentally attacks Anna out of panic.*)

This scene takes place in the ice palace as Anna tries to calm Elsa and reassure her that they can work things out together. However, Elsa, who is undergoing tremendous emotional pressure, begins to panic. She feels her fear has created an unsafe environment for others, including Anna. As Anna continues to approach and shows affection, Elsa becomes even more afraid of losing control. Ultimately, in her panic, Elsa accidentally hurts Anna for the second time. The conflict in this scene is very intense as it showcases the direct clash between Elsa's deepest fears and her greatest desire: to protect the ones she loves. Elsa wants to believe that love can save them, but her fears—of the uncontrollable power, of loss, of guilt—are far greater than her convictions. Her panicked reaction, even when faced with Anna's sincere affection, indicates that she has not been able to make peace with herself. According to Kenney (1966), the Man vs. Self conflict occurs when a character experiences a clash between two sides within themselves. In this case, Elsa's conflict is between trust vs. fear, or more precisely, between hope for safety through love and fear of failure that could hurt others. Her extreme reaction is not directed at Anna, but rather at the fear and inner pressure that has been held back for so long. Using Kenney's approach, which describes conflict as a form of 'A vs. B', Elsa's conflict here can be described as 'Panic vs. Protection' or 'Love vs. Fear of Destruction'. Elsa desperately wants to love and be loved, but does not believe she deserves or is capable of keeping others safe. The emotional decision she makes in this situation emphasizes that her inner conflict remains unresolved and becomes the main source of tension in the film's storyline.

Data 4 (Conflict 4): The Crowning and Elsa's Power Unveiled in Front of the Public

This scene takes place during Elsa's coronation as the Queen of Arendelle. Since childhood, Elsa has been taught by her parents to hide her ice powers, believing that "hiding means protecting." Over the years, she practiced controlling her emotions so that her powers wouldn't surface, sacrificing her freedom and self-expression to keep that secret. However, when Anna asks for her blessing to marry Hans—whom she has just met—Elsa feels pressured and the emotions she has suppressed explode. In a panic and frustration, her powers reveal themselves in front of everyone, causing a commotion and mass fear.

This moment becomes a significant turning point in Elsa's characterization. The conflict that occurs in this scene is a very strong form of identity conflict. Elsa is trapped between being the ideal queen according to societal expectations—calm, graceful, composed—and being herself, who possesses great power but is considered 'abnormal.' She has long suppressed her true self due to fear of rejection and uncertainty. However, in a high-pressure situation, the defenses she built collapses. The explosion of her power is a symbol of uncontrolled freedom,

not because she wants to show who she is, but because she can no longer pretend. In Kenney's theory (1966), the Man vs. Self conflict is described as a conflict between two forces within an individual, such as the true self vs. the self that others expect. Elsa experiences this very vividly: she struggles between her personal identity and social demands, between the need to be accepted and the need to be free. Kenney also suggested imagining the conflict as A vs. B; in this context, Elsa's conflict can be understood as 'Authenticity vs. Social Expectation.' Elsa's decision to flee to the mountains after the incident is an emotional choice born from that inner conflict. She feels that the world will never be able to accept her true self, so she chooses isolation rather than continue to force a role that does not reflect who she is. This shows how internal conflict not only influences actions, but also becomes a driving force of character narrative.

CONCLUSION

Through an in-depth analysis of the film *Frozen* (2013), it can be concluded that the internal conflict experienced by the main character Elsa is at the core of character development and the primary driver of the plot. Using Kenney's (1966) theory of Man vs. Self, this study shows that Elsa undergoes a complex internal struggle between fear, guilt, the desire for freedom, and the need for acceptance. Each form of conflict—whether it is when she rejects closeness with Anna, flees from society, or confronts her own identity—demonstrates a battle between two forces within her: between fear and courage, between protection and openness, and between self-identity and social demands. This conflict not only shapes Elsa's emotional journey but also represents a broader theme of identity, self-acceptance, and the power of love. Through a qualitative approach and narrative analysis based on Kenney's theory, this study successfully demonstrates that internal conflict in fictional characters can be a reflection of the true psychological dynamics of humans. *Frozen* not only conveys a fairy tale but also delivers a profound message about the courage to accept oneself, the importance of love, and the strength in vulnerability.

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