



Let It Go: Revising ‘The Princess Story’ in Disney’s *Frozen*

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According to Carl Jung, ‘a word or an image is symbolic when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning. It has a wider ‘unconscious’ aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained.’¹ Symbols and myths exist to respond to the fundamental agony of humans to understand the workings of the world and of the psyche and play a crucial part in the psychosomatic maturity of the individual. There is a twofold division, in Jung’s view, of the unconscious part of every human’s psyche: the personal and the impersonal or collective.² The personal comprises of components of the individual personality and therefore may be conscious. The second group forms ‘an omnipresent, unchanging, and everywhere identical *quality or substrate of the psyche per se*.’³ The collective unconscious is like an inherent reservoir of archetypes that affect the ego and are affected by the id. These archetypes are rooted in the universal psyche and resonate in our existence although in different reverberations throughout time and culture. The ones that affect the ego most often and to a greater extent are the shadow, the anima, and the animus.⁴ To achieve individuation, which is psychological maturity, the individual has to recognise and accept these archetypal elements of his/her own psyche.⁵ If he/she fails to do so, it may lead to a neurotic projection of unacknowledged elements of the psyche on to others.⁶ Hence, the ego has to negotiate the three major forces of the id; the ‘anima’, the ‘animus’, and the ‘shadow’.

This negotiation is depicted in, and aided by, fairy tales. Children’s stories – whether oral, printed, or in film – should aim at endowing children’s lives with meaning, as Bruno Bettelheim points out, and to ‘speak about his severe inner pressures in a way that the child unconsciously understands ... and offer examples of both temporary and permanent solutions to pressing difficulties.’⁷ Most fairy tales begin with the death of a mother or father which constitutes the most agonising problem for the child.⁸ Both as a fear of a possibly real predicament, the fictional death or absence of a parent urges the child not only to attempt to battle the chaotic elements in life, but also to realise that they must succeed their parents and become an adult; ‘to relinquish his infantile dependency wishes and achieve a more satisfying existence.’⁹ Thus fairy tales and their happy endings intimate that all hazards are necessary: the hero has to walk through the dark woods, battle monsters, go through hell

and sacrifice a part of him/herself – all of this, to ultimately find themselves.¹⁰ Bettelheim suggests that the fairy tale is 'therapeutic' because the patient 'finds his own solution, through contemplating what the story seems to imply about him and his inner pressures.'¹¹

A related inner pressure that fairy tales deal with is coming to terms with one's sexuality. The period of quiet growth, the coming of sexual maturity and the loss of innocence are all major psychosomatic changes for the budding adolescent. Tales such as 'Sleeping Beauty' assure the child that the latent phase of inwardness they go through does not mean that things stop evolving; the happy passage to the next stage of mating will soon come. Bettelheim notices that although the struggle to achieve independence is usually described differently for boys and girls, 'this is the result of sexual stereotyping.'¹² Whether they're about a hero or about a heroine, all sexes may identify with those tales. 'Fairy tales do not render such one-sided pictures.'¹³ Even when a girl is depicted as turning inwards to achieve maturity and a boy as turning outwards to aggressively face the world, 'these two *together* symbolize the two ways in which one has to gain selfhood: through learning to understand and master the inner as well as the outer world'.¹⁴ Therefore, without negating the differing social pressures that are put upon adolescents according to their sex, one would be a literal-minded interpreter to believe that fairy tales speak only to the individuals of the same sex as the protagonist.

Repression of sexuality, either heterosexual or homosexual, especially for girls is truly a 'tale as old as time'. Fairy tales such as 'Beauty and the Beast' intimate that sex is 'something animal-like, something to be afraid of, to hide, to shun ... tabooed much too early.'¹⁵ It starts at an early point in one's life – a point that one cannot recall – and has consequences that reach adult life. For Bettelheim, the success of the tale is that it teaches women to change their attitude about sex, 'from rejecting to embracing it,' so that their partner does not seem animal-like to himself and to them.¹⁶ One has to be brave and open-hearted to shed the load of predetermined, constricting gendered conceptions of sexual behaviour in order to redeem both oneself and one's partner from the initial 'spell' of repression.

Disney's *Frozen* (2013) appeals to the psychological maturation of the modern child/adolescent that has to deal with the absence of one or both parents, the repression of sexuality and social alienation as a result. All three major characters – Elsa, Anna, and Kristoff – have to make a journey that brings them face to face with danger several times; this journey is the archetypal path to atonement, renunciation and full realisation of the individual self.¹⁷ Using the Jungian concept of individuation and of the archetypes that determine this process, this paper will attempt to examine how Disney's *Frozen* revises the popular myths of the Disney canon and through them the archetypes of female individuation to offer a new myth that manages to rewrite the journey to maturity from the normalised, heterosexual narratives of the prince saving the princess to the story of a princess that saves another princess with the help of a commoner: a story of sisterly love and female and inter-class bonding.

Elsa is not the typical Disney 'princess'; she is the only Disney princess with powers and the only one to be made queen. *Frozen* was originally inspired by 'The Snow Queen', as Walt Disney himself wanted to adapt the Hans Christian Andersen tale for the screen but could not do so. Discussing the difficulties of adapting 'The Snow Queen', Peter Del Vecho, producer of *Frozen*, claimed that the film relates to the fairy tale only because 'there is snow and there is ice and there is a Queen, but other than that, we depart from it quite a bit'.¹⁸ Andersen's tale casts the Snow Queen as a sexually rapacious villain while *Frozen* creates Elsa as a dynamic model of femininity who overcomes the neurosis – manifested as uncontrolled ice powers – caused, as this paper will argue, by closeted sexuality and repression through the unwavering love bond between herself and her sister Anna. It is worth mentioning that a year after *Frozen*'s release, Disney 'reformed' the villain from *Sleeping Beauty*, Maleficent, in a remake of the same name, with arguably queer undertones where the true love's kiss to Aurora is offered by Maleficent herself. The boundaries of LGBT representation in fairy tale animation and film have already been pushed by Nickelodeon in 2012 with its *Avatar* series sequel, *The Legend of Korra*, whose series finale evoked the classic lovers-fade-into-the-sunset scene between the two female protagonists.¹⁹

Elsa's psychic journey is that of the Jungian hero who must realise that the shadow exists and that they can draw strength from it: 'Before the ego can triumph, it must master and assimilate the shadow.'²⁰ Thus, Elsa initially thinks that she can achieve maturity by repressing her powers. She views her powers as dangerous for the first time when she hurts Anna by mistake (00.05.27) with an ice blast on the forehead.²¹ It is however stressed from early in the film that ice is both dangerous and beautiful: the first song 'Frozen Heart' (00.02-00.03.15) symbolically refers to Elsa's power to freeze, how this power is both beautiful and dangerous, but also to her being misunderstood as cold-hearted. Consequently, she has to alienate herself from the rest of the world for fear that she could hurt them. 'Born of cold and winter air/And mountain rain combining' describes ice as the natural phenomenon it is: Elsa as the character who creates ice is therefore associated with nature. Furthermore, she is born with this gift and not cursed (00.07.30); hence it is a natural, inherent trait too. Nature's role is double-fold; it provides the space for Elsa's psychosomatic release of repressed desire but also is the manifestation of Elsa's power. Kristoff is the only major character introduced in the scene of the ice harvesters' song; he too is associated with ice and nature. The song's lyrics 'This icy force both foul and fair/Has a frozen heart worth mining', 'Beautiful!/Powerful!/Dangerous!/Cold!', and 'strike for love and strike for fear' play upon the Freudian concepts of libido and death drive. Creative and destructive energy, attraction and fear are linked together as they are both expressions of the most id-like properties of the psyche. Elsa is beautiful and powerful but also dangerous and forced into a cold behaviour towards her sister. Rarely do we have such ambivalent heroes in fairy tales; the polarisation traditionally serves to match the child's view of the world.²² *Frozen*'s departure from this motif of either pure good or pure evil shows that it appeals not only to children but to adults as well. Elsa's character

development comes at a stark contrast to the static, ever-loving, ever-trusting female leads of the past and reveals that Elsa is the heroine and not just the princess of the narrative. Oscillating between right and wrong, being rejected and persecuted, coming to terms with her dangerous potential are all necessary procedures to reach self-acceptance.²³ The song's injunction, 'Split the ice apart/And break the frozen heart' suggests violence: this is combined with the image of the harvesters cutting the ice in squares using a variety of long sharp tools, where 'square structures usually symbolize the Self, to which the ego must submit to fulfil the process of individuation.'²⁴ Individuation is therefore signalled as a difficult, painful and violent process: in accepting that her powers can be dangerous Elsa has to submit to confinement as part of the precaution taken by her parents; too much focus on restricting herself leads to neurotic symptoms of projecting ice uncontrollably.

The self contains the unconscious parts of the psyche²⁵ which include the 'shadow', the 'animus', and the 'anima'. The animus and the anima are projections; the source of these projections is not the shadow but a contrasexual figure; animus for a woman, anima for a man.²⁶ These archetypes are seldom realised and are further from the conscious self than the shadow.²⁷ The shadow is personal and can be seen with self-criticism; it is the projection of the negative aspects of one's personality.

The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real.²⁸

Elsa's shadow is represented as the neurotic symptoms of repression because her fear of her parents' and society's censure for accidentally hurting her sister regulates Elsa's ego rather than confidence: 'Fear will be your enemy' says the troll Elder, Grand Pabbie, to Elsa (00.07.48). The uncontrolled projection of ice that freezes everything and puts Arendelle in an eternal winter is the effect of Elsa's shadow.

Elsa's shadow is materialised as the vision of devouring shadows that consume her when the troll Elder warns her of her powers' dangerous potential. It is also the terrifying snow monster that attacks Anna and Kristoff. However, Elsa's powers are dangerous only when manifested as symptoms of neurosis rather than when they are wilfully used; her fear of herself is the fear of the shadow in her. Her destructive potential, as we have seen, but also the coldness and rigidity she practises so much are eventually emotionally assimilated. Elsa's paradigm shows that alienating and turning against one's self not only does not make one happy but also hurts the people one loves. Elsa's psychosomatic release of ice is translated in archetypal terms as the release from the confining structures of society towards women.

Ice is translated to proper femininity in its intricate, delicate, harmless formations such as snowflakes, light snow, swirls. This is why, firstly, the scene of the ice harvesters features huge blocks of ice that need strong men to be cut and carried; secondly, Elsa's combative potential comes in threatening spikes and piles of snow, while the trailer for *Frozen 2* has Elsa freezing crushing waves that tumble on top of her in an action-packed danger scene. All three scenes have the following in common: they display a prowess that is traditionally rewarded in masculinity but not admired as a display of femininity.

The other end of the binary of danger is beauty, as stressed above. Beauty is to be found in Elsa's potential of creativity. She is the introverted artist that hides from the outer world but works meticulously as the castle she creates follows snowflake geometry. According to Jung, '[w]hen a form of "art" is primarily personal it deserves to be treated as if it were a neurosis.'²⁹ Elsa's art isn't technically personal as it reflects the natural pattern of ice-gusts and snowflakes; however, she is the only one in her universe endowed with this gift. Elsa's art is ice-making and it both gives way to her repressed feelings but also pleases her and Anna with its magnificence. The beauty of her power is the constituent component of beautiful memories with Anna in childhood and of their bonding. There is a level of sexual fulfilment in creativity as sublimation: it is no coincidence that Elsa's ice is always ice (or snow) and never water – ice being the hard form of water – sometimes naturally covering the surroundings, sometimes coming out in splinters, sparks, spikes; all quite phallic in their formations. Jung claims, '[t]he auto-eroticism of artists resembles that of illegitimate or neglected children who from their tenderest years must protect themselves from the destructive influence of people who have no love to give them.'³⁰ Elsa's art is also a comfort to her anxiety as an orphan child.

Elsa may stand as well for the individual that fails to meet the social – and by default gendered – norms. 'Born with this power' refers to Elsa the repressed child/artist but also hints at Elsa's possibly queer identity if read along with her surrounding symbols: the purple colours of her room that, as a mix between blue and pink, have come to culturally stand for gay sexuality,³¹ the eerily closet-like room locks her feelings away and has a parallel with keeping queer feelings 'in the closet'. Elsa literally comes out of her closet/room on the day of her eighteenth birthday: this is her coronation day and the people are seen to say 'the queen has come of age'. The fact that Elsa's parents deal with her powers in a secretive way, instructing her to wear gloves and limit her interaction with the outside world, illustrates the process of tabooing something. Her gloves are made of silk: this might be an indication of her class, but it perplexes Anna, who, of the same upper class, believes Elsa wears them because 'maybe she has a thing about dirt.'³² The silk gloves are refined and luxurious but also symbolic of the loss of physical relationship, absence of touch and its unrealisation. Elsa's powers are clearly seen as 'non-normal': when healing little Anna from her head injury, Grand Pabbie 'changes all of her magical memories to *ordinary* memories.'³³ The parents intensify the difference in 'normalcy' between the two siblings by not only closing the outside world off Elsa, but separating the two girls in different bedrooms.³⁴

One can examine Elsa's only speaking snow creation in this vein as well: Olaf the snowman plays more than the role of the heroes' goofy sidekick. When Elsa first creates him she says as a ventriloquist behind him: 'Hi, I'm Olaf and I like warm hugs' to which Anna responds while hugging him, 'I love you Olaf' (00.04.48-00.04.51). He is therefore one of the first manifestations of love between the two sisters. As the song 'Do you want to build a snowman?' strongly points out, snow creations bring the two sisters close and keep the bond between them strong. This is perhaps why Olaf, although animated by Elsa when she builds her new castle, chooses to follow Anna in her journey: it seems that there is always a part of Elsa close to Anna. As a snowman that dreams of summer, Olaf is quite an unorthodox figure. He comments on the snowy landscape: 'Yeah ... It really is beautiful isn't it? But it's so white. You know, how about a little colour? Must we bleach the joy out of it all? I'm thinking like maybe some crimson, chartreuse ...' (00.45.30-00.45.39) Olaf wishes to queer the landscape by asking for bright, vibrant colour in snow and wishing that, as a snowman, he could enjoy the summer. He also delivers some of the most touching lines on love in the film. When Anna, freezing and disillusioned, says 'I don't even know what love is', Olaf responds 'Love is ... putting someone else's needs before yours' and insists on staying by her side because 'some people are worth melting for' (01.21.05-01.21.22). If Olaf, Elsa's animus and other, stands a materialisation of the bond between Elsa and Anna then he is a manifestation of love and, thanks to his own characteristics, a queer love.

Love and psycho-sexual maturity in *Frozen* are themes immediately connected to the original inspiration of the film, 'The Snow Queen' fairy tale. In Andersen's tale, the main characters are a girl and a boy, Gerda and Kai, who grow up as playmates and develop mutual love. The roses that remind the one of the other are symbols of warmth, rebirth, change of seasons, and sexual maturity. Anna was meant to resemble Gerda's innocent, persistent, and sensitive character. Kai on the other hand, afflicted by a splinter from the Snow Queen's troll mirror, begins to push Gerda away and becomes aggressive – much in the same way that Elsa is affected by her icy shadow. He is abducted by the Snow Queen, who kisses him to forget Gerda and enchants him, refusing to release him until he spells 'eternity' by matching mirror pieces like a puzzle. The meaning of this is the loss of innocence through the sexual awakening instigated by the numbing kisses that the boy experiences and the realisation of death which is allegorically portrayed as he strives to spell eternity until becoming almost numb. These changes happen so abruptly that they paralyse Kai in numbness and fear. Elsa's affinity with Kai is overt: her fear of the complexities of herself overwhelmingly grows with the death of her parents, who were able to keep her sexuality/powers in check with gloves and closed doors.

The quest of Gerda to retrieve her beloved one, who has been alienated and pushed her away due to the splinters in his eye and heart, involves sacrificing her red shoes in the river, asking the rose from the underworld in the garden of the eternal summer, and getting the assistance of a reindeer. Therefore, nature plays a role. Gerda and Kai, like Persephone

and Demeter; have to spend time away from one another in order to come closer together at the end.³⁵ Thanks to her innocent heart and her warm tears, Gerda can gain Kai back; she finds him lying on the Mirror of Reason, a frozen lake. Kai's abruptly cut-off innocence and the impossible task of spelling eternity suggest that the boy starts to believe in death and thus aging begins; in a similar way, Anna's being hit with an ice spell represents her disillusionment with Elsa and Hans and makes her hair white and starts freezing her to death. The climactic scene of *Frozen* has Elsa crying over a frozen sea before Hans attacks her. Gerda's kiss warms up Kai and restores the life within him. Anna's act of true love, putting herself in front of Hans's sword, breaks the spell and restores Anna to life and Elsa to self-possessed happiness, making her able to lift the abnormal winter spell. Gerda and Kai are so happy after the spell breaks that all the puzzle pieces dance until they fall to the ground and spell the word; eternity is achieved. When they return home they find that everything is the same and that it is *they* who have changed. Anna and Elsa, as Gerda and Kai, represent another reverberation of a coming-of-age fairy tale.

Coming of age and sexual awakening tales are particularly rich in archetypes such as animus and anima as they are linked to the different though parallel psychosomatic development of the sexes. According to Jung, animus is the male aspect of the female psyche, the archetype of reason and spirit in women:

Woman is compensated by a masculine element and therefore her unconscious has, so to speak, a masculine imprint. This results in a considerable psychological difference between men and women, and accordingly I have called the projection-making factor in women the animus, which means mind or spirit. The animus corresponds to the paternal Logos just as the anima corresponds to maternal Eros.³⁶

The animus for Elsa is her father: the image of strict, rigid, masculinity, the representation of logos, the first one to glove Elsa's hands and to teach her the axiom 'conceal, don't feel'.³⁷ It is the father's reasoning and orders which direct her life. Therefore, phallogocentrism represses Elsa. Her father wants to protect her and loves her but his love becomes restricting; he orders the palace gates to be closed, and limits Elsa's contact with others – even with Anna. After the death of her parents Elsa continues to behave cruelly to herself, being unable to control her powers, and emotionally cripples herself. She still behaves according to the wishes of her father: it is his portrait that she looks up to in her confinement. At the same time, she prepares to become a queen and assume his position. Elsa identifies with the animus of the father to an extent which results in her pushing others away and at the same time generating fear for the other aspects of herself. Like a child

abruptly cut from her state of innocence, Elsa is scared of her shadow and refuses to let herself feel. Thus, she completely shuts off the anima in her.

'Naturally, anima and animus are first met in projected form':³⁸ therefore, as her animus is projected onto her father, the anima in Elsa is projected onto Anna, whom Elsa shuts off for fear that she could harm her. Anna represents the impulsive forces of the id: she is identified with the stereotypical feminine princess as she is nature-loving; dressed in green colours, with birds all around her, celebrating life, singing, dreaming of meeting 'the one,' and impressionable. Ann(im)a is whimsical and lacks logic as in the beginning she agrees to marry the handsome prince Hans the first night she meets him. Much on the same note, the head injury happens accidentally, because Anna is going too fast and puts pressure on Elsa's powers. Anna is unruly so Elsa has to be extra-regulated to compensate. Excessive eros, that is anima, for the man is the mother; 'the real mother, her imago, and the woman who is to become a mother for him';³⁹ the realm of protectiveness and affection that he had as an infant in contrast to which the real world is not as appealing. It is no coincidence that Elsa closes herself in a dark, womb-like room, bitter that Anna can no longer remember she has magic. She knows she cannot retrieve their past. Anima is twofold, both nurturing and messy.

The character of Elsa seems to prompt a psychoanalytic reading to many academics and disciplines. Michelle Resene claims that Elsa's (mental or bodily) disability is encoded as fantasy – her magical powers – which I read in my text as neurosis.⁴⁰ Kowalski and Bhalla use psychodynamic theory to look at the themes of puberty, adolescence and sibling relationship at play.⁴¹ Lauren Dundes, Madeline Streiff and Zachary Streiff explore the gender symbolism as an expression of the controversy surrounding the subversion of binary conceptions of gender and conclude that '*Frozen* serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers inherent in an unattached female as the ultimate potentate.'⁴² Elsa can be read as a female character whose repressed sexuality leads to neurosis; her release from the emotional and physical confinement is emblematically portrayed in the song 'Let it go', the most iconic moment of the film and her coming-out moment, as I will argue. During the song Elsa transforms both physically and emotionally. She changes her attire from a strict high-neck coronation dress to a glistening gown made of ice that reveals shoulders in a gesture that signals the cold doesn't bother her – as it bothers people who are considered 'normal', the implication is. She takes down her hair: a liberating and sexual move for women, as to have your hair tied up is culturally considered formal. The lyrics of the song are a manual to a neurotic's primary release through excessive reaction: 'Let it go, let it go ... I don't care what they're going to say. The screenplay continues: 'Elsa struts onto out onto a balcony and into the light. she's free.'⁴³ Elsa resumes her song: 'that perfect girl is gone/ here I stand in the light of day'. She flings the palace doors open and Elsa is out, looking at the dawn (00.29.40). The lyrics speak to both teenagers and adults as an outburst of new-found self-acceptance and as a rejection of former feelings of shame, body consciousness and social anxiety to retain a perfect image, despite the psychosomatic changes natural to all.

Anna has her own journey too. Her need to rely on others – either on Elsa, on Hans or Kristoff – is a symptom of separation anxiety caused by the death of her parents. She begins to gain autonomy when she realises she has to find Elsa herself as she was the one who pushed her to (ab)react (00.30.14) when she announced her engagement to Hans. Anna experiences loss of trust when Elsa's ice hits her in the forehead and, like the original Snow Queen story, a crack in their relationship is formed and, as a first sign of passing from innocence to adulthood, she acquires a strand of white hair. Desperate for human contact, Anna throws herself, literally, at the first prince she meets, Hans. The traditional marriage plot – a must for the previous Disney princesses – is here a major disillusionment for Anna, who trusts that Hans's kiss is the act of true love that will thaw the ice in her heart. Hans, however, realises Anna's greatest fear when he says, revealing himself as a calculating villain, 'Oh Anna. If only there was someone out there who loved you' (01.15.48-01.15.53). Anna reaches individuation when she herself changes from the role of the child to be protected to the one that protects; when she realises she is capable of giving love without expecting something in return. She saves Elsa by putting herself in front of Hans's sword. Anna's bravery increases as she travels with Kristoff and her impulsiveness changes to decisiveness: for example, she approaches Elsa's castle knowing that it may be dangerous. Anna, through several tests, heads towards maturity – and with it, sexual awakening – in a full-blown realisation of her love towards Elsa rather than any such realisation towards Kristoff. Anna's frozen hand that manages to shatter Hans's sword is a powerful metaphor of sexual vigour as both sword and hand symbolically stand for the phallus in psychoanalytic terms. This proves to be the act of true love and when she comes back to life, Elsa asks 'You sacrificed yourself for me?', to which Anna responds 'I love you' (01.27.33-01.27.45). Thus, Disney revises the 'act of true love' from the typical kiss between prince and princess to the self-sacrifice of one sister for the life of the other: Anna's raised hand becomes stronger – and icier – than Prince Hans's sword – a metonymy for masculine virility but also sexual threat – and shatters it. The ultimate act of love, self-sacrifice, redeems both Anna from separation anxiety and Elsa from self-loathing.

Sherry Salman claims that for individuation, 'adaptation to the collective culture is not the ultimate goal':⁴⁴

In fact, this process, informed as it is by the mythopoetic psyche, often offers a *subversive critique* of social norms through the individual psyche's ongoing deconstruction of both personal and collective norms. Individuation is different from instinctive growth, regression, or general maturation. It is what the alchemists called the 'opus contra naturam,' the work against nature.⁴⁵

Hence Elsa's individuation is true as it subverts the social norms that demand that a Disney princess should be 'feminine' and that this femininity means powerless, ambitionless, underage girls waiting to be saved by a prince. Elsa redefines femininity by denaturalising it; she proves that her individuation as a woman is a painful process that is not granted to her along with a new dress. She has to let go of her father's orders – the animus – and to feel for her sister – the anima – by overcoming her fear of society, royal subjects, political enemies etc. that defensively turn her into a monster – the shadow in her. The Self-oriented ego has to relativise its identity and keep an ongoing dialogue with the above elements of the psyche to reach individuation: 'Its yield is the wisdom of the wholeness of life, the good and the evil, the light and the dark, and *amor fati*: acceptance and love of one's fate.'⁴⁶ Through this acceptance, Elsa redeems herself and the image of the feminine from repression as she adopts a behaviour what traditionally would be seen as 'masculine' in keeping anima under control and mediating the rigid animus. Elsa's animus is not only an identification with her repressive father but also a source of authoritative power. When Hans reveals his evil plan to Anna, he casually notes that he stopped trying to woo Elsa because 'no one was getting anywhere with her.'⁴⁷ Hans realises Elsa is not available to any suitors and this, along with her phallic ice spikes, suggests an energy that, at its most controlled, leaves no room for the prince to act his stereotypical manly role and, at its least controlled, becomes a serious force to reckon with: attributes traditionally associated with masculinity. If, as mentioned above, anima is two-fold, animus is also both rigid and frozen but also empowering and dominant. By bonding with the impulsive, uncontrolled, id-like Anna through ice's danger – the injuries in the heart and especially the head but also through ice's beauty and creative work, and by managing to control the shadow in her, assuming courage to leave the castle and channel her creative energy, Elsa achieves individuation.

In *Frozen* love is mediated through nature, as nature provides the space for the release of Elsa's icy own 'nature'; on a parallel note, nature is also the space of release for Kristoff. He is presented from the beginning as a natural man, covered in ice (00.37.05) who is integrated in society only when he learns what love is. Kristoff is a positive paradigm of masculinity in the film. He is much closer to nature and the animals rather than the human society. Kristoff is especially close to his reindeer, Sven, with whom he was adopted by the trolls from a young age. 'Reindeers are better than people. Sven, don't you think that's true?' Kristoff sings and responds in Sven's voice, 'Yeah, people will beat you and curse you and cheat you, every one of 'ems bad, except you' (00.38.45-00.39.00). There seems to have been a background story of abuse and rejection from humans for Kristoff and Sven. As a result, Kristoff identifies and sympathises with his carrot-loving reindeer. His family of trolls loves him although commenting 'his thing with the reindeer, that's a little outside of nature's laws' and 'he's socially impaired'; they also admit that 'his isolation is confirmation of his desperation for healing hugs' and that 'he's the honest goods' as they dress both Anna and him with crowns from leaves and capes of moss to marry them (all

qtd from the song 'Fixer Upper,' 01.05.45-01.08.23). Kristoff is associated with nature through Sven and the trolls; these are also symbols of his masculinity and are presented in favourable light.⁴⁸ In his alienation, and in his relation to ice, he mirrors Elsa: 'Ice is stronger than 100 men' (00.00.39-00.00.42), an association with a surpassing-of-the-typical masculinity. Elsa and Kristoff are doubled as they are the ones for whom 'ice is their life' (Kristoff in 00.53.42); Kristoff's social alienation serves to mirror Elsa's alienation and the refuge of them both in nature. Elsa's androgynous pairing with Kristoff suggests a sexual potency that is not dangerous, as Hans's is, but rather inviting – much in the same way that his male reindeer Sven and the rock-like trolls are likeable characters. Approaching Elsa's palace, Kristoff is able to admire her craftsmanship as a peer. He notes in awe, 'I might cry.'⁴⁹ Moreover, Kristoff is the only man not afraid of Elsa as he does not attack her in her outburst, which suggests that there is an affinity between them on the level of identification. The Kristoffian element of nature, identified with Elsa's moods but not with the typical mother-woman-anima archetype, causes Anna to eventually negotiate her superego and realise her mistakes in her judgment – her engagement to Hans – and compels her to save herself and ultimately her sister. Kristoff, in his turn, assumes the role of the brave prince when he realises he loves Anna.

Elsa and Kristoff both identify with nature in their own way, to reach individuation and become re-integrated in society. Elsa has to let go of the repression caused by her superego. Kristoff has to trust in people's potential to love and Anna has to believe in her own power to support others rather than being supported. All three characters map their own psychic rite of passage by sharing affinities with one another rather than playing specific gendered parts. Elsa's inner battle with the image of the 'good girl,' the 'fears that once controlled [her]'; and her power that she 'couldn't keep in' stands as a modern metaphor for the inner struggle of a woman asphyxiated by the gendered norms that instruct her to 'conceal' in order not to be ostracised (Song 'Let it go,' 00.31.20-34.46). Elsa's predicament appeals to any person that finds themselves outside the heteronormative model of sexuality. Elsa may well stand for homosexual women and thus be the first queer Disney princess.

Disney revises the canonical 'princess story' to meet the psychological needs of children/teenagers – especially girls – that feel sexually repressed, abandoned, or alienated, by providing the model of a dynamic, powerful, loving female character who incorporates both masculine and feminine attributes and redeems both from their representations. The character of Elsa negotiates the archetypes that figure women's individuation through men and manages to customise the journey to maturity and individuation from the normalised, heterosexual narratives to a story of sisterly love and female bonding.



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Notes

1. Carl G. Jung and M. L. von-Franz (eds), *Man and His Symbols* (London: Arkana, 1990), 18.
2. David H. Richter (ed.), 'The Principal Archetypes', *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, 2nd edn (Boston: Bedford Books, 2007), 518.
3. *Ibid.* Emphasis in original.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Ego is a part of the self, the psyche. For Jung the ego is a catalyst as it is the hardwired part of the conscious that wants to help the self achieve fulfilment rather than submit to impulses:

It is the ego that serves to light up the entire system, allowing it to become conscious and thus to be realised. If, for example, I have an artistic talent of which my ego is not conscious, nothing will happen to it. The gift may as well be nonexistent. Only if my ego notices it can it be brought into reality. The inborn but hidden totality of the psyche is not the same thing as a wholeness that is fully realized and lived ... Again, the realisation of this uniqueness in the individual man is the goal of the process of individuation.
6. Murray Stein (ed.), *Encountering Jung: Jung on Evil* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995), 162.
7. David Lodge (ed.), 'C.G. Jung', *20th Century Literary Criticism: A Reader* (London: Longman, 1972), 174.
8. Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (London: Penguin Books, 1978), 6.
9. Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 8.
10. Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 11.
11. Tales such as 'Snow White' and 'Cinderella' imply that 'the child can become himself only as the parent is defeated' (Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 310). Bettelheim sees the withdrawal of the parent as the allegorical retirement of the King from the throne in tales; the heir has to prove himself much in the same way that the child has to face the world on its own at a point. The blooming of the child's sexuality has to be at the cost of the parent's sexuality. Bettelheim sees the coming of age as both a natural and social process; Jung recognises the claim of the child to the coming of age in archetypal terms; the son's conflict with the Mother/anima inside him may either help him achieve acceptance or betray life: 'The unsatisfied longing of the son for life and the world ought to be taken seriously' (Richter (ed.), 'The Principal Archetypes', 520).
12. Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 25.
13. Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 226.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 283.
17. Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 286.
18. Jung and von-Franz (eds), *Man and His Symbols*, 149.
19. Peter Del Vecho, interview by Brendon Connelly, 'Inside the Research, Design and Animation of Walt Disney's *Frozen* with Producer Peter Del Vecho', *Bleeding Cool* <http://www.bleedingcool.com/2013/09/25/inside-the-research-design-and-animation-of-walt-disneys-frozen-with-producer-peter-del-vecho/> (2013). Accessed 23 Mar 2015.

Hans Christian Andersen's original version of 'The Snow Queen' is a pretty dark tale and it doesn't translate easily into a film. For us the breakthrough came when we tried to give really human qualities to the Snow Queen. When we decided to make the Snow Queen Elsa and our protagonist Anna sisters, that gave a way to relate to the characters in a way that conveyed what each was going through and that would relate for today's audiences ... There are times when Elsa does villainous things but because you understand where it comes from, from this desire to defend herself, you can always relate to her: 'Inspired by' means exactly that.
20. J. Bryan Lowder, 'The Striking Queerness of Maleficent', <https://slate.com/human-interest/2014/06/maleficent-queer-take-on-sleeping-beauty.html> (2014), accessed 2019. Lowder comments on the film's 'utter campiness' and its exploration of the queer family. See also Kevin Childs' article on Jennifer Lee's, *Frozen*'s codirector, coy answer to the rumours that Elsa may be 'out' in *Frozen 2*. Childs reports that '[f]or *Frozen 2*, fan Alexis Isabel Moncada launched the #GiveElsaAGirlfriend campaign on Twitter, which drew a countervailing campaign in conservative circles'. Kevin Childs, '15 Disney Characters Confirmed (Or Speculated) to be Queer', <https://www.cbr.com/disney-characters-queer/>: CBR.com (2018), accessed 2019. On 'The Legend of Korra', see Gavia Baker-Whitelaw, 'Legend of Korra' Creators Confirm Gay Romance between Korra and Asami', *The Daily Dot* (2014), <https://www.dailydot.com/parsec/korra-bisexual-asami-finale/>.

20. Jung and von-Franz (eds), *Man and His Symbols*, 118.
21. Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (directors), 'Frozen' (Walt Disney Pictures, 2013). Film screenplay.
22. Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 9.
23. It is no wonder why the most popular and marketable character in Frozen is Elsa rather than Anna whose journey is followed on screen.
24. M.L. von-Franz, 'The Process of Individuation', *Man and His Symbols*, 163.
25. Lodge (ed.), 'C.G. Jung', *20th Century Literary Criticism*, 517.
26. Lodge (ed.), 'C.G. Jung', *20th Century Literary Criticism*, 519.
27. Jung's definition of archetypes: 'Non-personal phenomena always manifest themselves in dreams as mythological motifs that are also to be found in legends and fairytales throughout the world. I have called these mythological motifs archetypes; that is, typical modes or forms in which these collective phenomena are experienced.' Quoted in Stein (ed.), *Encountering Jung: Jung on Evil*, 447.
28. Stein (ed.), *Encountering Jung: Jung on Evil*, 14.
29. Richter (ed.), 'The Principal Archetypes', 185.
30. Richter (ed.), 'The Principal Archetypes', 186.
31. 'Hermaphrodite' colors are widely embraced as symbols of pride in the LGBT community. Purple, more specifically, is found in the bisexual pride flag and is also linked to the Friday of the Purple Hand protest in San Francisco in 1969. Matt Petronzio, 'A Storied Glossary of Iconic LGBT Flags and Symbols', Mashable (13 June 2014), accessed 17 July 2014; 'Friday of the Purple Hand', The San Francisco Free Press (15-30 November 1969), accessed 1 January 2008, courtesy the Gay Lesbian Historical Society.
32. Buck and Lee, 'Frozen' screenplay, 46.
33. Buck and Lee, 'Frozen' screenplay, 7. Emphasis added.
34. Ryan C. Robert writing for Quodda: 'Disney's "Frozen" may not have intended for one of the main characters, Elsa, to have a story that is such an easy parallel to the world of growing up in the closet, but it happened', qtd in Kieran Petersen, 'Disney's Frozen and the "Gay Agenda"', BBC News (2014), accessed 23 March 2019.
35. The birds, the crow and the doves that tell Gerda of Kai stand for the superego as well as the higher ideal of love and self (Bettelheim, 101 and 213). The raven as the teutonic god Woden's raven stands for mature consciousness. The reindeer relates to feeling closer to nature, a motif of the animal groom tales that suggests sexual awakening (Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 100, 284).
36. Jung qtd in Richter (ed.), 'The Principal Archetypes', 521.
37. 'Just as the mother seems to be the first carrier of the projection-making factor for the son, so is the father for the daughter' Jung qtd in Richter (ed.), 'The Principal Archetypes', 521.
38. David L. Hart, 'The Classical Jungian School', in Polly Young-Eisendrath and Terence Dawson (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Jung* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008), 99.
39. Richter (ed.), 'The Principal Archetypes', 520.
40. Michelle Resene, 'From Evil Queen to Disabled Teen: Frozen Introduces Disney's First Disabled Princess', *Disability Studies Quarterly* 37(2) (2017). DOI 10.18061/dsq.v37i2.5310.
41. C. Kowalski & R. Bhalla, 'Viewing the Disney Movie Frozen through a Psychodynamic Lens', *Journal of Medical Humanities* (2018) 39: 145. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10912-015-9363-3>.
42. Lauren Dundes, Madeline Streiff and Zachary Streiff, 'Storm Power, an Icy Tower and Elsa's Bower: The Winds of Change in Disney's *Frozen*', *Social Sciences* 7(6):86 (2018). DOI 10.3390/socsci7060086.
43. Buck and Lee, 'Frozen' screenplay, 37.
44. Sherry Salman, 'The Creative Psyche: Jung's Major Contributions', Young-Eisendrath and Dawson, *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*, 72.
45. Salman, 'The Creative Psyche', 72-3, emphasis added.
46. Salman, 'The Creative Psyche', 73.
47. Buck and Lee, 'Frozen' screenplay, 95.
48. The alternative family structure presented through the trolls advocates that functional families do not need to belong to the heterosexual marriage norms.
49. Buck and Lee, 'Frozen' screenplay, 63.