

The Portrayal of Good Characteristics in American Animation Films *Frozen* (2013) and *Frozen II* (2019)

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Abstract. This study aims at revealing the portrayal of good characteristics depicted by *Frozen* (2013) and *Frozen II* (2013). Besides the main data from the films, reference sources in the form of books and journals were also used for analysis. Hall's theory of representation was applied to analyze the data gathered for this study such as dialogs and the description of scenes from the films to identify good characteristics are represented through the films as well as to understand the concept of having good characteristics. The result of analysis showed that the animation films observed in this study can represent good characters through seven values such as bravery, politeness, sacrifice, empathy, curiosity, confidence, and caring which can be perceived as fundamental elements in building character. Through this study, it expected that the findings can contribute to the development of the theory in humanities and education and it can provide better understanding to people about character building through American animated films.

Keywords: *American animation films, character, good characteristics*

<http://jos.unsoed.ac.id/index.php/jes>

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays learning can be done in various ways. One of the ways is to learn from media such as movies, newspapers, magazines, radios, etc. Currently, learning can be conducted whenever and wherever as everybody has often spent some time on entertainment media – one of them is film. There is no doubt that film plays an important role in people's life because it can be the source of entertainment as well as knowledge (Adi, 2011, p. 71). This idea means people can also learn many things by watching films. Because of their essential role in people's daily life, movies need to be observed and learned (Buckland, 1998, p. 1).

Movie is the audiovisual communication media to supply a message to a group of humans gathered somewhere (Uchjana, 1986, p. 134). The goal of the movie is to entertain audiences. This study can show the importance of film in transferring knowledge, especially on how someone's character may be influenced. Furthermore, it can be understood that movie is conceptualized as a part of art which may function as a portrait of truth and characteristics of people reflected in media. It is true that the characters, plot, settings, and so on shown in films are indeed fictive. However, behind those fictions, there can be many signs or symbols that mean something. Therefore, it is interesting as well as essential to learn what a film may represent. For many years, American films have dominated all the cinemas around the world, including Indonesia. Those films are served in many kinds of genres so that they can attract the people of all ages. As a result, watching film becomes a fascinating activity to do, especially among teenagers. Animation films, for example, have been popular among youngsters. Even a lot of adults enjoy watching animation movies.

Many may people obtain opinions, perceptions, etc. about their surroundings through the films they watch (Norden, 2007, p. xvii). Thus, it makes sense that many people, particularly children, will be influenced by the animation film characters they watch. Therefore, an animation movie can be an interesting film that everyone can learn in order to identify important aspects related to human behaviors. One of the popular American animation movies is *Frozen*. This animation movie has gained a lot of popularity around the world.

Moviegoers in Indonesia, for instance, enjoy watching these animation films. This condition may let people know that *Frozen* can have certain impacts on those who watch it. Thus, this study concentrates on the relation between character shaping and the American animation film – *Frozen*. The study intends to identify the kinds of good characteristics represented by the main characters in American animation film *Frozen* and to understand the concept of having good characteristics.

The purpose of the study can be perceived from two ways. Theoretically, this study is used to contribute to the development of relevant studies such as film studies, cultural studies, literary studies, pedagogy, etc. This study may also offer a theoretical perspective or a way to conceptualize social and cultural phenomena for research purposes. Practically, this study may contribute to help teachers or parents to teach their children about good characteristics from animation films. In addition, this study may also be expected to provide an understanding of the use of animation films *Frozen* for the purpose of learning good characteristics.

Several studies on *Frozen* discuss the linguistic aspects, for example, the research from Cahya (2016) and Nurmaharani (2021). There is also a study from Denik (2015) about the moral values of only *Frozen* (the first part) without specifically mentioning the significance of character formation. Some studies, for instance, Patel (2015) writing about the comparison of princess characters of Disney and Nulatifasari (2018) which discussed the characterization of protagonist and antagonist in the film. Therefore, the studies mentioned above are different from this study.

RESEARCH METHOD

The American animation film discussed in this study is the *Frozen* (2013) and *Frozen II* (2019). The study focuses on the main characters of the animation film in order to identify the characteristics depicted by the main characters. It is undeniable that animation films produced by Walt Disney can always attract people to watch. This is due to the creativity, beautiful arts, and a lot of qualified works which Walt Disney has generated.

As the point mentioned previously, the two American animation films were used in this study because these two animation movies were phenomenal in Southeast of Asia, especially, in Indonesia when they were released. Thus, using these two animation movies in this study can be very useful to depict what the dialogues and scenes represent.

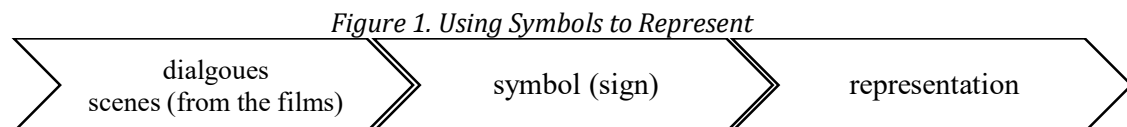
This library research is also qualitative research. In terms of research technique, qualitative research aims at gathering as much information, opinions, perspectives as possible in order to identify certain phenomena (Hariwijaya & Djaelani, 2004, p. 39; Creswell, 2010, p. 16). This part also elaborates the techniques used to gather and analyze the data. The main data collected for this study were qualitative data. As the point mentioned previously, qualitative research incorporates qualitative data which includes dialogues and scenes from the animation films as followings:

Table 1. The Source of Data to Analyze

No	Movie Titles	Year	Duration	Producer	Country
1	<i>Frozen</i>	2013	1:42:13	Walt Disney Pictures, Inc.	USA
2	<i>Frozen II</i>	2019	1:43:14	Walt Disney Pictures, Inc.	USA

The primary data were in the forms of dialogues (from leading characters) and scenes taken from the two animation films above. The selected dialogues and the description of scenes (shown in the Discussion chapter) would be processed to identify the representation depicted in the films. Besides, the primary data above, this study also used secondary data which were used to comments as well as explain the main data. The secondary data were acquire from references such as books, journals, magazines, and some reliable internet sources.

The collected dialogues and scenes were treated as signs (symbols). As a part of semiotic system, collected data (dialogues and movie scenes) represents meanings. The combination of image and sensation is connected to semiotics – sounds of object and talking in a movie can show representations (Johansen & Larsen, 2002, p. 38). Additionally, it is explained by Adi (2011, p. 227) signs can be understood as representations. This ideas is also emphasized by Hall (1997, p. 19) that any objects including pictures, perceptions, statements, etc. can be classified as signs (symbols). In other words, those symbols may convey certain meanings if they are carefully interpreted as followings:



The scheme above shows that the selected dialogues and scenes from the films can be interpreted to show what they represent. Therefore, the data were processed by using the theory of representation. Firstly, the dialogues and scenes from the films were clustered and labeled based on the relevant headings. Next, these labeled data were treated as signifiers to be interpreted to obtain the meanings (signified). The meanings served as the representations. Since character building is always associated with good characteristics. The principle of determining good characteristics can be seen through the traits or attitudes that will make life ethically meaningful such as courage, care, respect and thoughtfulness (Lickona, 2008, p. 64). These considerations were basis to determine the good things shown by the main characters in the two animation films.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Having Good Characteristics

Having good characteristics is indeed essential because human beings live together in a society which requires interactions living with others in society is not easy because everyone has his or her own selfishness. Since people have their own ways of life and thoughts, being a person with a good personality is important. For this reason, there are many schools or educational institutions emphasize the need of building good characters for their students. This can be seen through the mottos, programs or curriculums educational institutions prioritize in teaching their characters to students (Chowdhury, 2016, p. 12). Additionally, in the digital era, providing character education has become easier by the presence of social media.

First of all, it is important to understand what character is. Character can be defined as the expression care, affection, or kindness that one shows to others (Agboola & Tsai, 2012, p. 168). So, those basic elements shape character. Additionally, character is related to “respecting” and “integrity” (Doty, 2006, p. 3). This, again, means character is linked to two morals which have been rare in societies because people have not really understood the relation between character and values.

To explore the concept of character further, *The New International Webster’s Student Dictionary of the English Language* (Landau, 1996, p. 118) defines character as “the combination of qualities or traits distinguishing any person or class of persons”; “any distinguishing or essential quality or property”; “moral excellence”; and “a good reputation”. From the four definitions stated above, character may refer to a set of good values which influence someone’s social life.

Moreover, as character is often associated with qualified attitudes or ethical behaviors, people find a way to build character, especially for their children, since they will play an important role in the future. Therefore, parents must understand that it is important to develop their children’s character through social interactions (Arthur *et al.*, 2015, p. 20) because it takes time to shape people’s character (Pala, 2011, p. 23). Teaching characters to children will work if parents as well as children have the commitment to apply ethical behaviors such as being responsible, kind, polite, etc. in daily life (Lickona, 1997, p. 79). The ideas above

show that good virtues must be taught and practice day by day because those contribute to the so-called “character”. So, it can be understood that having good characteristics can be considered the basic of character building which may be thought as character education that many education institutions are focusing on.

Building character means teaching good values (kindness, respect, caring, etc.) to someone so that he or she will show good behavior and attitudes in society. This point can reflect that character building is essential because society with people of good values, morality, and attitude will have peace and harmony. This is because everyone in society is responsible for the harmony of society (Han, 2008, p. 161). For this reason, character building is significant to everyone.

Regarding the importance of building good characteristics, there have been education for character building arranged by many education institutions for developing children’s characters. Learning good characteristics can be considered as a way to educate people, especially children in order to make them learn the importance of having good morality which may involve the role of family, educational institution, media, society and government (Sudrajat, 2011, p. 57). So, teaching good characteristics, especially to children is significant because it will generate good values for the sake of society. Good characteristics can actually be observed from various kinds of experiences or media in everyday life, one of them is through animation movies. For example, the American animation films *Frozen* (2013) and *Frozen II* (2019) present the good characteristics shown by the main characters.

The Representation of Good Characteristics

There are several significant characteristics of the leading characters Elsa, interpreted during the film viewing. These characteristics reflected by the main characters in the movies reveal that animation films play a significant role in shaping one’s character. From the data analysis by using Hall’s Theory of Representation, the most frequent scenes and dialogues found in the animation film *Frozen* (2013) and *Frozen II* (2019) may represent good characteristics.

The traits of courage, care, respect and thoughtfulness mentioned by Lickona, are reflected in the characteristics depicted in the movies. From the analysis, good characteristics are represented in animation films *Frozen* (2013) and *Frozen II* (2019) through seven values as shown in the table below:

Table 3. Seven Values for Character Building

The Representation of Good Characteristics						
bravery	politeness	sacrifice	empathy	curiosity	confidence	Caring

Based on Lickona’s idea (1997) about good characteristics, courage may refer to bravery, sacrifice, curiosity, and confidence. Care means caring whereas respect and thoughtfulness may refer to politeness and empathy. To discuss further, there are dialogues and scene from *Frozen* (2013) and *Frozen II* (2019) which can show the representation of good characteristics through several kinds of feature as followings:

Through Bravery

Bravery is one of the most frequent portraits in the films discussed in this study. It is generally known as courageous. It is very important to be brave because life does not always run smoothly. It has twists and turns that make people face failure, insecure, confusion, etc. People may simply define bravery as having courage to face difficulties, threats or danger (Freeland, 2007, p. 56; Grider, 2007, p. 144). In other words, when someone is ready to face anything that would happen in a dangerous situation, he or she is considered brave or courageous. For this reason, an educator can use this kind of animation film to teach their students about shaping a character of bravery.

The depiction of courage shown by the character reflects that courage may be influenced some conditions such as how someone achieves something; how he or she or her puts efforts in reaching his goals and how he can struggle to reach it. The main characters Elsa and Anna in the animation film *Frozen* are frequently depicted as brave girls. They are described as strong girls who are not afraid of facing any obstacles. This can be seen through many of their dialogues and actions portrayed in the film.

One of the parts of the animation film, for instance, shows the dialogue between two leading female characters shown in *Frozen* (2013):

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

Anna: You don't have to protect me. I'm not afraid, Please don't shut me out again. (55.43)

The dialogue above may reflect that both girls are prepared for any situations they face. The depiction of girls overcoming fear and danger may represent bravery. In addition, there is a scene presenting dialogue as the following:

Prince Hans: You slipped on ice

Duke of Weselton: Her ice

Anna: Tonight was my fault, I pushed her. So, I'm the one that needs to go after her. She didn't mean it. She didn't mean of any of this. (30.11)

The dialogue above shows that a female character exposing courage may reflect the need of being courage, especially women. Even though many people may probably think that women have less courage, in fact, this representation can tell that courage is found in everyone.

It is true because basically people who are courageous are those who can control the fear and face the risky situations. Being brave is actually important because it useful to survive, especially for female children. This may reflect the girl's power which has not been frequently shown in patriarchal societies. This condition is also often found in Indonesian culture (Adi, 2011, p. 94). In other words, the presence of female heroes in animation movies is seen as a contribution to shape one's character, particularly children who enjoy watching animations.

Through Politeness

One of the most frequent characteristics shown by the main characters in the animation films in politeness. There is a dialogue in *Frozen* as the following:

Olaf : All right, let's start this thing over. Hi everyone. I'm Olaf and I like warm hugs.

Anna : Olaf? That's right Olaf.

Olaf : And you are?

Anna : I'm Anna. (46:31)

As a part of respect, being polite in this animation is shown through the pleasant words addressed to someone such as expressing compliments. Holmes (1992, p. 296) explained that if someone shows politeness, he or she considers other people's feeling. This is actually a good a thing to learn. In the digital era, it may be difficult to see people showing politeness to others.

After analyzing the films, the characters seemed to show politeness frequently. There is a dialog, for example:

Anna: Elsa. It's me Anna. You look different. It's a good difference and this place is amazing.

Elsa: Thank you. I never knew what I was capable of. (54:10)

The dialog above portrays that Anna praised her sister's new appearance and the palace that was built by her. In the dialog, it is clear that after hearing Anna's praises, Elsa become enthusiastic and happy. Another example from *Frozen* (2013):

Duke: The Duke of Weselton, Your Majesty. As your closest partner in trade, it seems only fitting that I offer you your first dance as queen.

Elsa: Uh...Thank you. Only I don't dance.(21:04)

Politeness is really needed to build good relationship and to have a good social interaction with other people. Showing politeness by praising or expressing compliments sincerely is good. Additionally, it is said that showing politeness may show how people present themselves to others. Therefore, one of the ways to show politeness is to express compliments or respect to others in a right way.

It may reveal that praising can make people who hear it flattered and it can also motivate them. Choosing the right words to please other people sincerely is not a difficult thing to do. It is a good characteristic to adopt. Communicating ethically is not only about using good speech but it is also related to conveying the sense of empathy.

Through Sacrifice

Another good characteristic is represented through the reflection of sacrifice. There are some kinds of sacrifice such as time, material, energy, life, etc. It is true that not everyone can sacrifice for others. However, sacrifice himself or herself for others may be considered as the most powerful affection. A person who sacrifices himself for others wants them to know that he can show a very strong care or affection towards them. This may be perceived as a part of courage.

Regarding this, Righetti & Impett (2017, p. 7) pointed out that people who receive sacrifice from the others are the ones who get benefits. In other words, it is done for the sake of the recipient. It is shown in the following dialog from *Frozen* (2013):

Olaf: So, where's Hans? What happened to your kiss?

Anna: I was wrong about him. It wasn't true love

Olaf: But we ran all the way here.

Anna: Please, olaf, you can't stay here. You'll melt.

Olaf: I'm not leaving here until we get some other act of true love to you.

(20:36)

In the dialog between Olaf and Anna explained that Olaf, in the form of a snowman, sacrificed himself to start a fire to provide warmth to Anna who is sick. It is clear that Olaf's sacrifice can signify the most powerful friendship. There is a strong possibility that the will to sacrifice may result in a stronger relationship (Van Lange *et al.*, 1997, p. 1393). This can also be seen in friendship. It will get stronger if both friends are willing to sacrifice.

Through Empathy

The characters from the films also depict the sense of empathy. It can be seen through the following dialog from the film:

Anna: It was an accident. She was scared. She didn't mean it. She didn't mean any of this. Tonight was my fault I pushed her so, I'm the one who needs to go after her. Bring me my horse, please.

Hans: Anna, it's too dangerous.

Anna : Elsa is not dangerous. I'll bring her back and I'll make this right.

(30:05)

It shows that Anna understood Elsa's feeling. She knew that Elsa was feeling unhappy for what she had done. She also felt unhappy for that. That can be described as empathy. It is known as the ability to feel what others feel (Ioannidou & Konstantikaki, 2008). In other words, if someone shows empathy, it means he or she is able to understand someone's feeling or conditions, so that he or she will not simply judge someone. This may be related to the state of being thoughtful. Therefore, empathy is certainly one of good characteristics that one must have.

Through Curiosity

The representation of good characteristics depicted in animation films *Frozen* (2013) and *Frozen II* (2019) can also be seen through the expression of curiosity portrayed by the main characters. Commonly, people understand people who have curiosity are those who tend to show passion or desire to know and explore something they want to know. In general, this can be considered as a good characteristic. In *Frozen II* (2019), for example, one of the scenes had a dialog such as following:

Elsa: You have seen an enchanted forest?

Anna: Wait, what?

King: I have, once.

Anna: And You've never told us this before?

King: Well, I could tell you now...

Elsa: Okay. Now.

Anna: Tells us now. (01:38)

The dialog above shows that Elsa and Anna urged their father to tell them what they really want to know. This signifies that curiosity reflected in both characters may be useful to show that people, especially children who watch *Frozen* can see the significance of having curiosity. Being curious is a common characteristic found in people who are courageous.

However, it is important to note that curiosity is a good feature which is important to grow the sense of learning. Another example is seen through this dialog taken from *Frozen II* (2019):

Elsa: What happened to the spirits? What's in the forest now?

King: I don't know. The mist still stand. No one can get in. And no one...

Queen: So we're safe.

King: Yes. But the forest could wake again. And we must prepared for...

Queen: And on that note, how about we say good night to your father?

Anna: But I still have so many questions.

King: Save them for another night, Anna.

Anna: You know I don't have that kind of patience. (04:55)

Being curious is important because it may help people to know more about something and eventually it would become knowledge for them. Regarding this, Markey & Loewenstein, (2014, p. 228) explained that curiosity which is generally considered as craving for details can play an essential role in educating. In other words, having curiosity may stimulate someone to figure out something he or she does not understand. By this way, it may lead him to learn something.

Curiosity is certainly significant because it has a huge impact to human's life (Loewenstein, 1994, p. 75). For this reason, curiosity can motivate people, especially students to explore something further. Some other dialogues shown in *Frozen II* (2019) which may portray curiosity such as:

Anna : How can it be?

Elsa : What is it?

Anna : Mother and Father's ship.

Olaf : But this isn't the Southern Sea. (52:53)

...

Elsa : Why is their ship here? How is it here?

Anna : It must have been washed in from the Dark Sea.

Elsa : What were they doing in the Dark Sea? (53:17)

...

The main characters of the films who kept asking and trying to investigate everything in order to obtain the truth can symbolize that being curiosity is the key to identify something. In addition to that, curiosity can be useful especially in education because it may help improve learning (Markey & Loewenstein, 2014, p. 240).

Through Confidence

The representation of good characteristics from the film can be seen through the portrait of confidence reflected by the main characters. Confidence may be considered as a part of being courage. In *Frozen II* (2019) for example, there a scene the following dialogue:

Elsa: The next right thing is for me to go to the Enchanted forest and find that voice.

Kristoff: can I borrow your wagon and Sven?

Kristoff: I'm not very comfortable with the idea of that.

Anna: You are not going alone.

Elsa: Anna, no. I have my powers to protect me. You don't. (23:08)

The main character, Elsa confidently said that her power was strong enough to protect her. There is a sense of confidence in the statement. It is true that in reality, confidence is something that not everyone has. Thus, many people may sometimes find it difficult to be confident. Obviously, being confident may influence one's performance. For instance, in mastering a foreign language, one needs to be confident to use it. This is because there is a relation between results and confidence (Tunçel, 2015, p. 2584). Confidence is needed in many aspects of life.

By portraying confidence in films, people can be motivated to be more confident. This is similar to Norman and Hyland's idea that even though one can manage his own confidence, his confidence will be more if he gets supports from people around him (Norman & Hyland, 2003, p. 13). Thus, scenes which portray confidence could show representation of good characteristics. Since having confidence is essential, through this animation film, parents can guide their children by explaining to them that they could learn the importance of being confidence from the scenes they watch.

Through Caring

Finally, one of the most frequently characteristics depicted on the films is caring. In fact, scene showing care appeared the most in both *Frozen* (2013) and *Frozen II* (2019). It is obvious that care can represent good characteristic. Showing care is related to kindness and it is important because it generally reflects one's image in society even though this may often be complicated. The world of course needs more people with kindness to be peaceful. There are some scenes along with the dialog depicting main characters showing caring from in *Frozen* (2013):

Anna : What are they?
Kristoff : Wolves
Anna : Wolves? What do we do?
Kristoff : I got this. You just... Don't fall off, and don't get eaten.
Anna : But I want to help. (42.15)

The Dialog above reflects that Kristoff showing his care by telling her that he could manage to save her. In general, being caring can mean showing kind intention toward someone.

Caring is not only expressed to people who are bound in family but also to friends, colleagues, and other people. It is something essential to be applied, not only at home, but also at schools or work places. Regarding this, Noddings (2005, p. 6) explained that caring can contribute to morality learning and therefore it is a very important core value. In other words, being care for others can symbolize kind actions.

Kindness could be applied anywhere and anytime. At school, for instance, teachers who motivate their students to perform kindness may bring about a large impact to society (Binfet, 2015, p. 55). In other words, if people are taught to be kind, they will act kindly to others and this will continue to influence more and more people. Being kind has many advantages. One of them is to get happiness. People begin to see that being kind may contribute to one's happiness (Curry *et al.*, 2018, p. 320).

American animation films such as *Frozen* (2013) and *Frozen II* (2019) which are popular among children, can symbolize good characteristics necessary for people, especially children. Those good characteristics are represented through the depiction of bravery, politeness, sacrifice, empathy, curiosity, confidence, and caring shown in the dialogs and scenes in the films. Those seven features are considered significant because, they are needed in shaping a good personality which are known as good ethics. Additionally, it is acceptable to say that films as entertainment media may also provide good values to learn and to behave (Cortés, 2000, p. 67). This is especially suggested to be used in teaching ethics, language and culture to children that may be useful for building their characters.

CONCLUSION

American animation films consist of many symbols which can represent significant values regarding character building. Therefore, film can be useful to learn life values pictured in the form of symbols. From the discussion above, this study concludes several essential points.

Firstly, by having good characteristics as the basis for character building, people can understand the importance of moral values and ethical attitudes. Thus, the concept of having good characteristics can be perceived as something essential because it has a great impact on society. Additionally, by having good characteristics, all people, particularly, Indonesian young generations can continue creating peace and harmony for the country.

Secondly, the result of analysis reveals that the interpretation of the dialogues as well as the scenes on American animation movies *Frozen* (2013) and *Frozen II* (2019) can represent seven kinds of good characteristics through the depictions bravery, politeness, sacrifice, empathy, curiosity, confidence, and caring. These seven values play a significant role in shaping one's personality.

Finally, this study also suggests that American animation films such as *Frozen* and *Frozen II* can be useful for the purpose of character building learning, especially in education.

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